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ZX SPECTRUM

A NEWSFIELD PUBLICATION
No. 39 APRIL 1987
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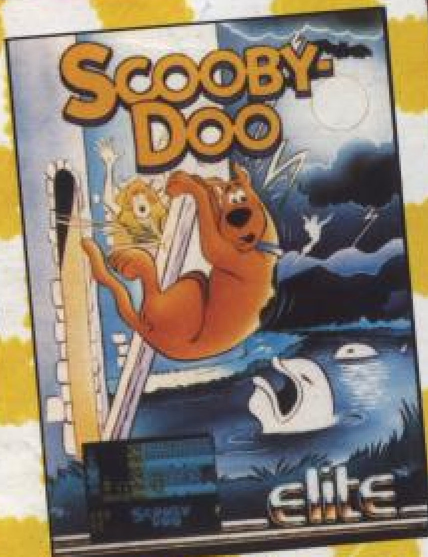
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CRASH

ZX SPECTRUM

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DIY

FEATURES

REGULARS

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BBC Micro Software Top 10
January 12th 1987

1.	Repton 3	Superior Software
2.	Ravenskull	Superior Software
3.	Stryker's Run	Superior Software
4.	Micropower Magic	Micropower
5.	Computer Hits 3	Beau Jolly
6.	Winter Olympics	Tynesoft
7.	Sentinel	Firebird
8.	Commonwealth Games	Tynesoft
9.	Karate Combat	Superior Software
10.	Trivial Pursuit	Domark

Compiled by Gallup Chart Services (Reproduced by kind permission of Gallup)

Superior Software Ltd is unquestionably the leading software house for the BBC Micro and Electron — with chart-topping programs such as *Repton, Thrust, Stryker's Run, Citadel, Ravenskull* and *SPEECH!* In addition, *Repton 3* and *SPEECH!* have also been successful releases for the Commodore and Amstrad computers.

Our authors have been successful too. Tim Tyler, a 17-year-old from Exeter, has so far earnt £41217.15 in royalties from sales of his *Repton* games; and Peter Johnson, the author of *Overdrive* and *Deathstar*, has now received £36593.46.

As part of our program of continued expansion, we are looking for top-class programmers of **all** home computers, including: Spectrum, Commodore 64/128, Amstrad 464/664/6128, Commodore 16/+4, Atari ST, Amstrad 1512 PC, Commodore Amiga, BBC Micro and Electron. We are also eager to contact games designers, graphics designers, and composers of computer music.

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CRASH
ZX SPECTRUM

Readers who have already 'flicked' through this issue, will have noticed that there have been some changes in the CRASH you have come to know over the past few months. Most of these changes are ones among the staff, and perhaps the most obvious is that CRASH has a new Editor. Well, not exactly new.

Graeme Kidd, who has so ably guided CRASH to its current pre-eminence among all British computer magazines, whether they be specialist or general, has moved across to edit our sister title, LM, while I have returned to edit CRASH. In pursuance of the need to keep a fresh perspective, recharge the creative batteries, and provide you, the reader, with the best possible magazine, Graeme and I decided to 'swap' roles.

So 'Traitor' Kean returns, after a perambulation through the Commodore 64 world, the Amstrad domain, and a nine-month sojurn with non computer-owning philistines that resulted in the launch of LM.

For readers who joined the CRASH fold after the August 1985 Issue (the injuncted one!), perhaps I should explain my background.

It was April 1983 that the concept for a Spectrum games magazine first blinked into existence in the minds of Oliver Frey, Franco Frey and myself. We worked at it for several months, trying to persuade the extremely sceptical newstrade that there was need for such a magazine. And so it was October that year before we got the go-ahead to start. By then Crash Micro Games Action, a mail order firm, had been selling Spectrum games for about six months, and as the Editor of the proposed new title, I had managed to gain a pretty good grasp of games playing (and racked up some fairly good scores as well – *Penetrator* completed 11 times . . .).

Despite a brave attempt to get the magazine launched before Christmas, Issue One of CRASH actually went on sale on Friday the 13th of January 1984 – a lucky day indeed. I reviewed games with the other members of a growing review team, and edited CRASH right up until Issue 18, before handing over to Graeme Kidd, who had been the Assistant Editor for six months. In moving over to ZZAP! 64, I earned the appellation 'Traitor' from CRASH readers! Somewhat unfairly, as I have always kept well in touch with CRASH, have always been its publisher, and many of the pages you have read over the last year and a half may well have been 'laid out' by my own hands.

The other changes at CRASH are spelled out over the page, but meanwhile I'm looking forward very much to re-establishing contacts with both people in the trade and with the CRASH readership through these pages, and maybe finding the time to get through *Penetrator* for a twelfth time – if there's still a copy around . . .

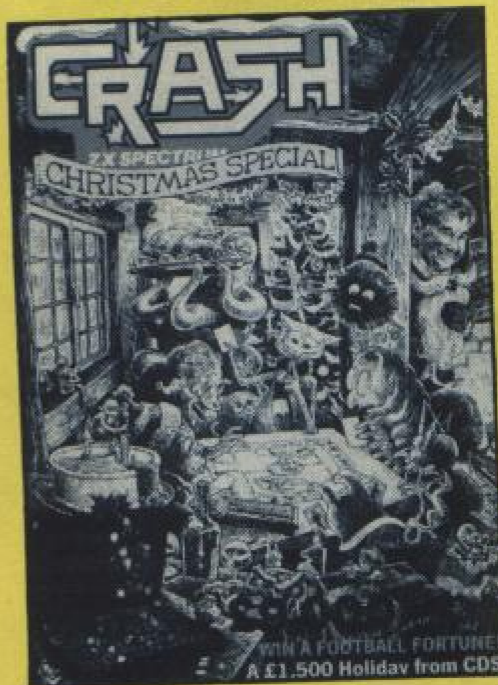


Roger M Kean

1987 BACKNUMBERS

No 36: Xmas 1986/1987
*Another dose of traditionally festive fun, this year accompanied by Issue 0 of **LM** and containing a peek behind the scenes in Grovel Hill, where they make the magazine that bears Lloyd's initials. Lloyd himself looks back over 1986 giving a resume of the games we all played. Mel Croucher begins the saga of TAMARA KNIGHT: Part One of the tale of a fast-food salesbeing of the future is accompanied by Part Two. Simon Goodwin finds that it isn't just Spectrum owners who are playing Spectrum games . . . Apart from the usual regular features, we talked to the DENTON DESIGNERS and found out about the split, reviewed Kat Trap, the GENESIS game and looked at musical add-ons. Not forgetting the definitive CRASH Index for 1986 and the NEWSFIELD Reviewers' Challenge . . .*

Maps included *Infiltrator*, Level One of *Scooby Doo*, all of *Heartland*, *The Great Escape*, and *Druid*.



No 37: February 1987
The man behind JETMAN is interviewed and reveals a few of his dark secrets, and we reveal the dark secrets of the trio of reviewers chained up in the CRASH Dungeon. TAMARA KNIGHT continues her adventures, as does Franco Frey in the world of Video Digitisers. The full match report on the Match Day Challenge is given, in which we tell how one of the programmers responsible for the classic game ended up 'sick as a parrot'. Games mapped in February included part of *Fairlight II*, all of *Firelord*, *Avenger* and *Dandy*.

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ALL CHANGE AT THE TOWERS

A MAGAZINE is rather like a human being; it grows, goes through phases and changes – yet it never quite loses touch with its past and its roots. Hopefully it never loses touch with its readers. For the last six months CRASH has been undergoing several changes. Some of these have been obvious ones on the presentation side; a new look for Smashes, reviewers' names appearing under critical comments in the reviews, a revamp of the games ratings and so on.

Others have been among the staff. For a while Graeme Kidd has had an overseeing role on CRASH, as Publishing Executive for all Newsfield's computer titles, and the role of Editor has been an unclear one. That now changes with Roger Kean's return to the Editor's chair (the only one in the office with castors).

Another new face is that of Richard Eddy, who until recently worked on AMTIX!. But Richard's Spectrum pedigree is unquestionable. He's owned one since early 1984, and was a CRASH reader almost from the first issue. His name first cropped up at the Towers when he sent in his version of a page heading for Lloyd Mangram's FORUM. Lloyd was impressed enough to use it in Issue 18 (July 1985). But it was another year before the persistent Eddy's literary bombardment paid off, and in desperation to keep him quiet, he was employed as a staff writer.

Richard's long games-playing experience will be put to good use in the reviews, and in helping poor, hard-worked Lloyd with checking out POKEs, tips and maps.

Which brings us to the next major change. Lloyd's back with the Playing Tips section – for a few months anyway. Lee Paddon – there's an article by him in this issue – and Hannah Smith have left the team as part of the reorganisation. Melissa Ravenflame has girlie tipstering to herself again, but as we all know, the Raving Dame's only half the woman she's supposed to be.

There are still some alterations planned in the review section of CRASH. Many letters have said how much better things are with the ratings after the recent revamp there, but improvements are still to come. Ben Stone has been getting to grips with 128 versions for the extra review comment box on mainstream games, but if they still seem a little thin on the ground this month, forgive us for the inevitable confusion created by so many changes in the office. Ben will be right on top of next month.

And as you will see in this issue, a lot more reviews have been given colour screens than ever in the past, and we're hoping to do even more next issue as part of the never-ending quest to improve CRASH and bring you the very best in Spectrum gaming.

ADVERTISERS' INDEX

INDEX TO GAMES REVIEWED IN THIS ISSUE



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COMING NEXT . .

Well, spring has well and truly sprung. The snow is slowly leaving the Ludlowvian countryside and giving plenty of room for the snow drops. And with Spring comes another flood of Spectrum games. **ARIOLASOFT** appear to have a fair few products in the pipeline – first off there's *Ziggurat* a 3D arcade adventure featuring lots of wonderfully weird puzzles and the arrival of the dreaded Mimbies – a cross between a Mummy and a Zombie and for some unexplained reason look like boy scouts. From their **STARLIGHT** label comes *Dogfight 2187*, a vector graphic shoot 'em up, and a mysterious program going by the name of *Deathscape* – previews next issue.

The team down at **CRL** have been wallowing in copious amounts of mud over the last few weeks as they prepare to launch a game with distinct piggy overtones – OINK! Based on the silly goings on within **IPC**'s comic of the same name, this game sees you taking the role of the legendary Uncle Pigg – the illustrious Editor. The objective is to produce a magazine by the day's end and increase circulation. All your favourite OINK! characters are featured, including Rubbishman and Pete and his amazing Pimple.

While we're on the subject of animals, **THE EDGE** (Aka **SOFTEK**) have bought the rights to the world's most laid-back cat ever – Garfield. They're planning to release a series of Garfield games, with *The Big Fat Hairy Deal* pencilled in as the first release. No doubt this game will make you paws for thought (Sorry!). **THE EDGE** are also leaping on the *Gauntlet* bandwagon with a 3D variant which goes by the name of *Warlock*. It has a neat twist though – you're on the side of darkness and your cosy castle has been invaded by a bunch of soppy girlies all dressed up in Princess outfits. Being of the evil nature there's no problem in slaughtering them to pieces. Once again we'll have a preview next issue.

ELITE have been a bit quiet recently, but they are due to release their second *Six Hit Pak*, featuring seven games(???) The seventh game, *Duet*, is previously unreleased – however, you might recognise it. Well, if you add a few letters to *Duet* and take a few more away you end with *Commando* 86, which is really what it is – but we didn't tell you that.

Stringfellow Hawk's Airwolf has been scrapped for the time being, although it might reappear in a different guise one day. *Ikari Warriors*, which is a kind of pretty *Commando*, is now due for an early summer release.

GREMLIN are also going to be busy, what with *Krakout*, a *Breakout* variant; *Thing Bounces Back*, the return of the popular Commodore hero – *Thing On A Spring*; *Deathwish III*; *Battle of the Bands*; and *Tour De Farce* – more news on that little lot next month.

GARGOYLE are nearly ready with their follow ups to *Heavy On The Magick* (still riding high in the Adventure Charts), the first one's called *The Trials of Thenon* and following that will be *The Tombs of Taro*.

INFOGRAMES, the people who brought you *Mandragore* and *The Vera Cruze Affair*, have tied up with French company **ERE INFORMATIQUE** to bring two arcade adventures that have long enjoyed immense success on the Amstrad – *Get Dexter* and *Doomsday Blues*. *Get Dexter* is a 3D game featuring some stunning graphics and probably the cutest hero ever – Xunk – a single-footed creature who bounds about the screens warning our hero Dexter of ensuing meanies, and there are plenty of them. There's also the follow up to *The Vera Cruze Affair* – *The Sydney Affair*. It takes the same form as its predecessor, but is a bit more involved. Derek Brewster will be casting an eye over that in a few months.

From **OCEAN** comes *Taipan*, a 128K only game, an arcade strategy game which takes place in the orient. There's smuggling, piracy and all sorts of other dodgy dealings. Once again, more news as we get it. There's also *Star Sleigh* previously known as *Slapfighter*, *Rampage*, and finally *Renegade*, a future coin-op conversion.

Palace are departing from the usual spooky goings on in their *Cauldron* series, and going to give us all a bit of a giggle with *Stifflip and Co*. It's set in the closing days of the British empire using 'Stiff upper lip' humour. Super, what?

Finally, there's **US GOLD**, who have a veritable host of releases hidden up Richard Tidsall's sleeve. There's a humourous boxing game, *Fight Night*; *Gauntlet II – The Deeper Dungeons*; a helicopter combat simulation – *Gunship*; a wild west shoot out – *Express Raider*, and their two latest licences – *Road Runner*, from the arcades, and *Indiana Jones and the Temple Of Doom*, from the movie of the same name.

THE VIRGIN GUIDE TO FOOTY HOOLIGANISM

"Ere we go, ere we go, ere go . . . allo John, goin down ta watch the footy?"

"Nah . . ."

"Ow come? On our way to Wembley . . ."

"Well, why should I when I've got my Spectrum to play wiv, knowarramean?"

"Dooooo wot? You're goin kick your puter around?"

"Nah, I've just bought the latest version of **VIRGIN**'s *FA Cup 87 Football*. It incorporates every league club's form for the 1986 season as well as new manager's questions to test your judgement. Basically, it's yer latest simulation of the FA Cup, officially licensed an all that, with the option of including one fantasy team and hopefully lead it to the hallowed terf at Wembley."

"Oh yeah, an' how realistic is it?"

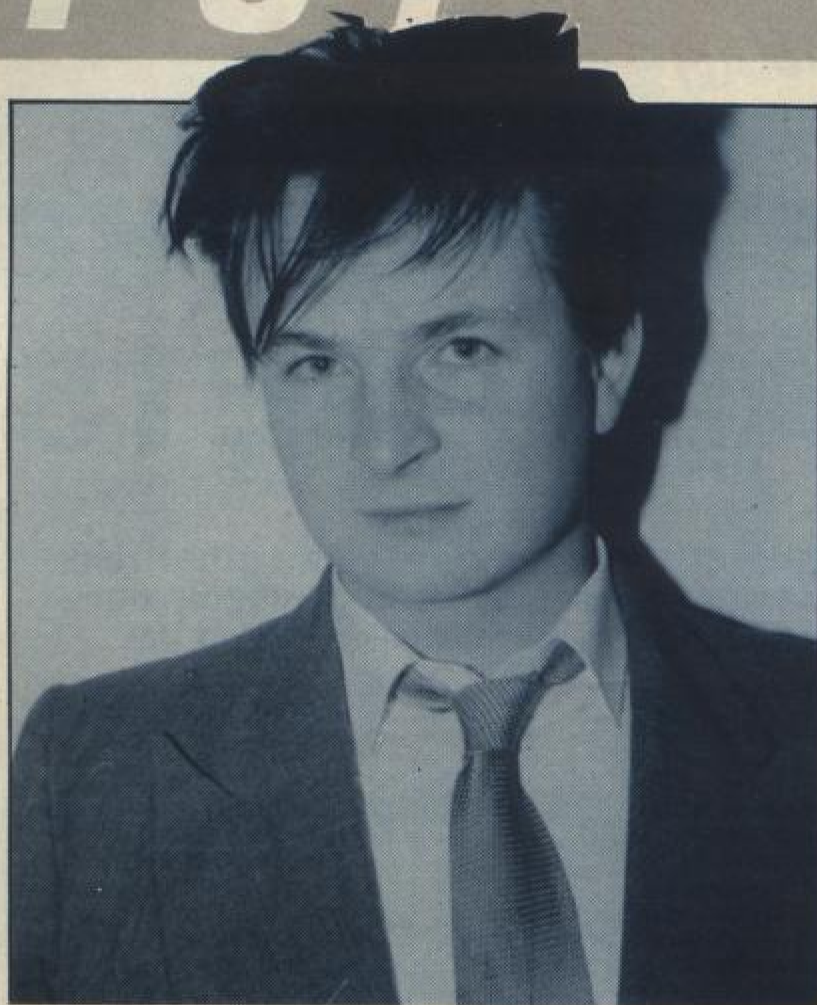
"Well, just like in real life there can be an upset of because of the Giant Killer Factor which means that occasionally a little club could beat a heavily favoured team."

"Ow much den?"

"Yours for only eight quid *and* ya get five pence change."

"Oo told y'all that den?"

"Oh, a little dickie (Branson) bird."

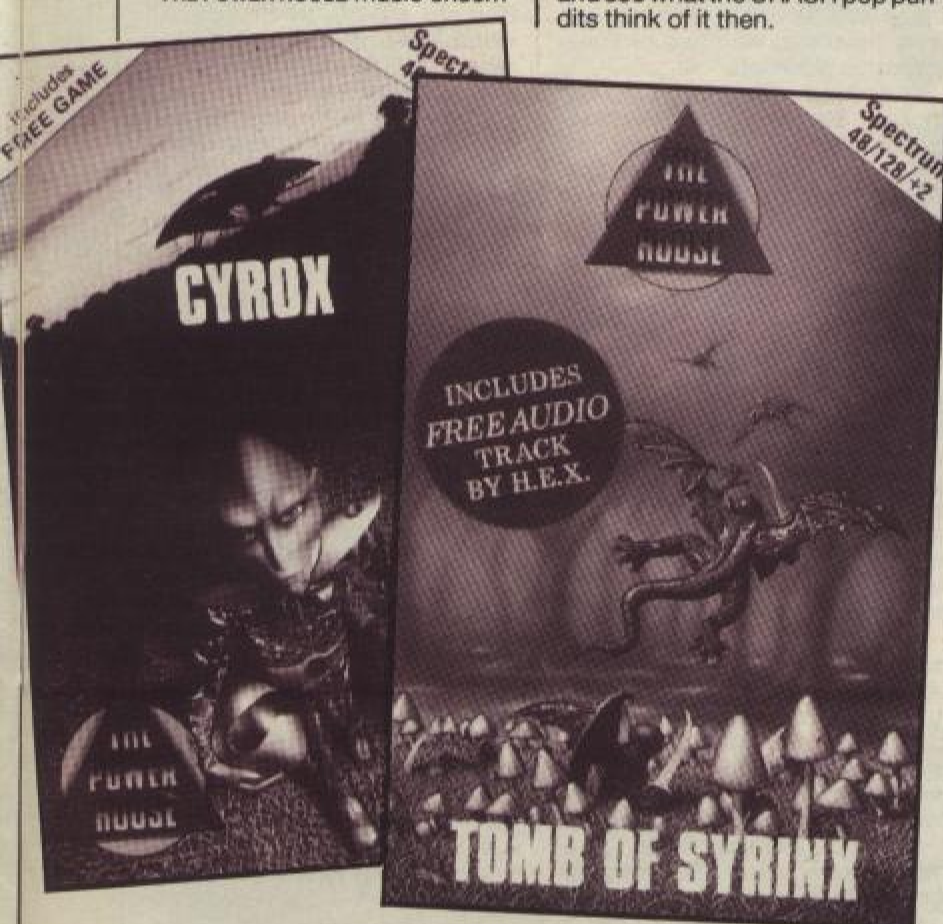


Wayne Allen, the power behind The House Electronic Xperience's music

POWERING UP

THE POWER HOUSE, CRL's cover up label for ALPHA OMEGA, has announced that every game they release will contain either a free game or a free audio track.

THE POWER HOUSE music ensemble is headed by Wayne Allen of the HOUSE ELECTRONIC XPERIENCE. *Tomb Of Syrinx*, which is due for review next issue, includes such a track, but you'll just have to wait and see what the CRASH pop pundits think of it then.



A MOVING STORY FROM DOMARK

Just a quickie to inform you all that Dominic, Mark and the rest of the DOMARK crew have been very busy over the past few weeks. It has been a common occurrence to see the two lads tramping across Wimbledon, carrying plastic bin liners and boxes full of unwanted copies of *Friday the 13th*.

Why? Are they melting them down to make a life size model of the Eifel Tower? No! DOMARK are moving house – yes, even the potted plant has been evacuated and moved to their new address at: Domark House, 22 Hartfield Road, Wimbledon, London. SW19 3TA, and that's where you'll find them.

MARTECH'S OOPS SORRY DEPT

MARTECH have discovered that a glitch in their duplication department has resulted in the duplication of the wrong version of their judo simulation, *Uchi Mata*. Anyone who has already bought the game actually has an early preview copy, as opposed to the final finished version. One certain way of telling if you have one of these preview copies, is that at the end of the game the scores don't return to zero but continue to raise.

If your previous copy is returned MARTECH at: Bay Terrace, Pevensey Bay, East Sussex, BN24 6EE a new copy will be issued immediately and postage will be refunded. If you want to get in contact with MARTECH in the meantime give them a ring on 0323 768456



THALAMUS ARE GO!

NEWSFIELD's software house, THALAMUS, have undergone a few changes recently. Andy (Flathead) Wright and Gary (The corpulent one) Liddon have deserted us for Pastures New but Paul Cooper has stepped into to run it. "So far," says Paul, "THALAMUS have been a very Commodore orientated company. However, I don't want to see the Spectrum neglected so I'm currently hunting around for programmers in the hope of bringing a Spectrum release for the summer." We are waiting with bated breath Paul.

OUR EX - ED's +3 PREDICTIONS COME TRUE!

It appears that every other Spectrum magazine is raving about the rumours of the fabled +3 – the Spectrum with a three inch disk drive. We would just like to remind them that tucked neatly away on page eight of the July 1985 issue, without exclusive plastered all over it and without an 'artists impression' was our own Ex -Ed's, Graeme Kidd, story.

Simon Goodwin will bring you the true story behind the +3 when it is released to the buying masses.

NEW ADDRESS FOR MAIL ORDER!

CRASH Mail Order has a new address for you to note down. We've mentioned it on every ad, but just in case, please remember. The change is very slight. All mail order or subscription items should now be addressed to* PO BOX 20 *and not to PO Box 10. The address for editorial material such as Forum, Tips, Charts etc, remains the same. Thank you.



LIFE BETWEEN THE SPREADSHEETS

All's quiet on the games front at the moment, so I thought that I might as well temporarily defect to the 'serious' side of computer journalism. Aaaargh! . . . it's not worth it, no matter how good the aperitifs are.

You probably think that journalism is a never ending round of food and booze. Well, normally it is . . . but there comes a time when the freebies run dry!

This terrifying situation happened to me in February. A quick rifling through the pages of my diary revealed that nobody wanted to whisper sweet nothings to me about some new game, while treating me to a three course lunch of course – this was serious!

After all, I am a starving hack with a leaky roof to support . . . there was only one thing for it. I would have to search for scraps in new gutters, go down new avenues, get into practices of the most perverted, disgusting and depraved kind - worse, even, than using a Commodore - all to keep body and soul together. I mean business computing! PCs! Databases!! Spreadsheets!!! Programs you CAN'T play with a joystick. Oh the shame that *I* should be reduced to this.

Actually, I quite enjoyed seeing how the other half lives (by the other half I mean those brainy types who think that micros are meant for serious pursuits). But how was I to infiltrate this secretive brotherhood?

Minson's first law of ligging states, once you get your foot in the door, your mouth will soon follow. Got to a launch, chat with your fellow journos, and they're sure to let slip where the next free bunfight is taking place.

So it was off to the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, for the launch of something called *WordStar 4*, yet another version of the word processor that's had more sequels than Rocky. Up I rolled, looking very chic, albeit a trifle sweaty, in my brand new black latex rubber bomber jacket, intending only to scoff, pick up the product and scarper.

Those were my first mistakes. Everyone was wearing suits and ties and the programme of events, indicated a full schedule, lasting till 4.00! Getting out of there alive was going to be like escaping from Colditz, I thought!

Still, the food was excellent - especially the profiteroles - and the presentation wasn't without its little joys, like the moment when a feature of the all-talking, all-singing and all-dancing package . . . refused to work. Mucho red faces on stage and merriment from the audience. But the real fun came with the questions and answers session. It was then that I learned why these are the elite of computer journalism.

WordStar once had a competitor called *NewWord*. I say 'once' because MICROPRO, who own *WordStar*, liked the competition so much that they bought the company . . . bye bye *NewWord*!

But it transpires that this was not the case. The people who produced *NewWord* were also busy working on a new version of their program, and according to their supporters in the audience, large chunks of it had ended up in the product that we'd just seen. "So why didn't you call it NewWord?", they shouted.

The mood began to get ugly. Scarves bearing the words "NewWord never dies" appeared, and a low chant of, "Control, K,Q! Control, K, Q!" apparently an obscure death threat, started. I sensed that it was time to leave. Like the bard said, "What's in a name?" This looked like an excellent package, whether Star or New.

As I tried to sneak out a woman stopped me. Had I been caught playing hookey from the main event? No worry. MICROPRO have learned a lesson from my friends at HEWSON and gave every hack a parting present - only because this is grown up computing we didn't get plastic spacemen . . . we got bottles of red wine. Cheers!

My next venture into this shady underworld was to BORLAND's press do, also for a new word processor – I never learn, do I? The invite said 4.30 to 7.00, which I took to mean an informal gathering. I'd neglected the capabilities of these hacks to haggle for two and a half hours and more. When I rolled in at 6.00 they were already into the tenth round and going strong.

I grabbed hold of a glass of champagne and slid as unobtrusively as I could into a ring-side seat. Actually, it was right under the BORLAND management's noses, but the action was all in the audience. And don't ask me what it was about, other than journalists trying to show off to each other. BORLAND never needed to stand up for themselves, because every time one person slagged them off, somebody from a rival publication leapt to their defence.

An hour of this was all very educational, but it seemed determined to continue all night, so I made the proverbial excuse and left, picking up a very tasty BORLAND T-shirt on the way out. I can't comment on the quality of their software, but their clothing is great! Apparently those who stayed to the bitter end were rewarded with two of these exclusive garments!

I needed my beauty sleep though, because I was Birmingham bound. The Which Computer Show is one of the great gatherings of the business clans, and going from experience of PCW Shows, I reckoned the aisles would be running red - though whether with wine or journalistic blood I wasn't sure, especially after the BORLAND brawl!

Three days later I was still wandering round the National Exhibition Centre in search of a friendly face. I'd briefly seen Sir Clive's new portable, but got thrown off the stand because, in the delirium brought on by lack of food and/or (more probably) alcohol, I'd mistaken this slim little thing for a sandwich box and tried to eat it.

All I can tell you is that the keys tasted a little rubbery - though certainly not the old-style Spectrum types that some people have been claiming - and that its display winked both clearly and angrily at me. It looked just the thing for writing this sort of nonsense as I sit on a Northern Line train, if Sir Clive would like me to 'rail' test one (hint, hint!).

No food though, and I wasn't even allowed to refer to the name Sinclair unless I had written permission from the boys on the AMSTRAD stand. Then, as I wandered along a distant, forgotten side of the hall, I heard a cheerful voice, "Hello, John" and found myself gazing into the eyes of **Mike Baxter**'s delicious new assistant, **Sarah Donovan**.

"But what are you doing here", I babbled. "Get away! They're after our brains!" I was convinced that I was in some 50's 'Invasion of the Body Snatchers' scenario, where the aliens all wore little name badges and wanted you to buy their PC clone. "It's all right", said another voice, "You're among friends now." And lo and behold, if it wasn't the grinning Baxter himself.

As my fear subsided I began to recognise other faces. There was **Richard Bielby**, the man whose distribution skills put MASTERTRONIC into newsagents, garages and vending machines in loos next to the Durex. Having done so much for the £1.99 game, he now intends to do the same for the £99.95 business package. And I mean 'package', because NERIC's *Integrated 7* includes everything a working person could ever need, except of course a coffee maker.

But I needed more than coffee, and thankfully so did Mike and Sarah, who dragged me off to a neighbouring bar to extol the joys of the NERIC spreadsheet. We continued until I was more ready for bed sheets, then they poured me onto a London bound train - though I'm pretty sure I heard somebody suggesting I should be thrown under it.

And that's it. I'm back in the smoke, nursing a NERIC hangover, sipping away at my MICROPRO medicinal wine and wearing my BORLAND shirt. Maybe the business scene isn't as bad as I'd feared, but I thing I'll stick to blasting aliens and knee-capping kung fu fighters! Getting into bloody conflict over which way a text window should scroll is just too weird and psychotic.

Yours in F&L and G&Ts!

Hunter S Minson

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LEADER BOARD

Producer: US Gold
Retail Price: **£7.95**
Author: **Bruce and Roger Carver**

Leader Board provides every budding Severino Ballesteros with the opportunity to take a golf ball for a walk, without getting rained on, catching hypothermia, or even being footsore. As with the real game, the objective is to hit a ball around a golf course in as few shots as possible.

Between one and four 18-hole rounds can be played on four different courses. When more than one course is played, they can be undertaken in any order. Alternatively, the same course can be played, four times in succession. Each course is divided into a tee, a long fairway, and the green – with the hole near its centre. At each hole the golfer's view is given, looking down the fairway to the distant green and flag.

There are three degrees of difficulty for the budding golfer to choose from. At novice level the ball can only be hit straight; at amateur level, hook and slice are introduced; and when professional status is reached, allowance must be made for a wind factor if the ball is not to drift off course.

Fourteen different clubs can be used – all hit the ball over different distances and in different ways. Woods allow the ball to be hit with greater power, essential when just starting from the tee, whilst Irons allow greater control over the medium length shots. Over shorter distances a Pitching Wedge and a Putter are used. The club must be chosen with regard to the distance to the hole, as indicated on the right hand side of the screen – this 'ball to hole' distance is revised as each shot is successfully played.

Shots are aimed using a cursor, which appears several 'yards' in front of the golfer. Swinging the club requires careful timing and concentration if the ball is to be hit the right distance and not hooked or sliced. Power for each stroke is controllable, with the level of power used shown on the Power Snap indicator on the screen's left hand side. When a shot is hit the ball can be seen curving through the air, and hopefully towards the hole. At the Professional level, tee-off and iron shots are affected by the wind, and allowance must be made if the ball is not to drift away from the hole. To aid the golfer's aim further, an indicator shows the wind's direction and strength (the stronger it is the taller the indicator).

When the ball is on the green, and within 64 feet of the hole, the flag is automatically removed, and the putter selected – no other club can be used while on the green. Unlike other shots, putts travel along the ground and are greatly affected by the incline of greens, which may slope up and downhill, and to the left or right. This must be taken into account when aiming the shot and selecting the level of power. The degree and direction of the slope are shown on the right hand side of the screen.

A score indicator shows which player is in action, how many strokes they have taken at the current hole, and their cumulative score for the the round. A par value indicates the number of strokes a good player should take to complete the hole. Each hole's par is combined to give a par value for the whole course. A player's score can be equal to (E), above (+), or below (-) this par.

Hazards are encountered on each round, and affect the golfer's score if played incorrectly. Many of the greens and fairways are close to water, or contain other hazards such as bunkers and trees. Should the ball land in any of these, the shot must be replayed from its previous starting point. If the ball is not kept on the course, and hit out of bounds, the golfer is similarly penalised. With every shot that has to be re-taken, a stroke is added to the offending player's score.





Making good use of his One Wood, Severiano Cameroneos clears the water trap and heads for the green. Fore!

CRITICISM

● **" Okay, a couple of months ago I believed that anything to do with golf sims would be tedious – this month sees me eating my words . . .** Leader Board **is really something special! The gameplay is initially slow and unaddictive, but stick with it and** Leader Board **becomes incredibly compulsive. The graphics are naff, your golfer moves well but the fairway is drab and badly coloured. The sound effects are minimal, but they're not noticeable by their absence. I can't imagine that this will appeal to everyone, but *I'm* certainly hooked – and I will be for some time to come. "**

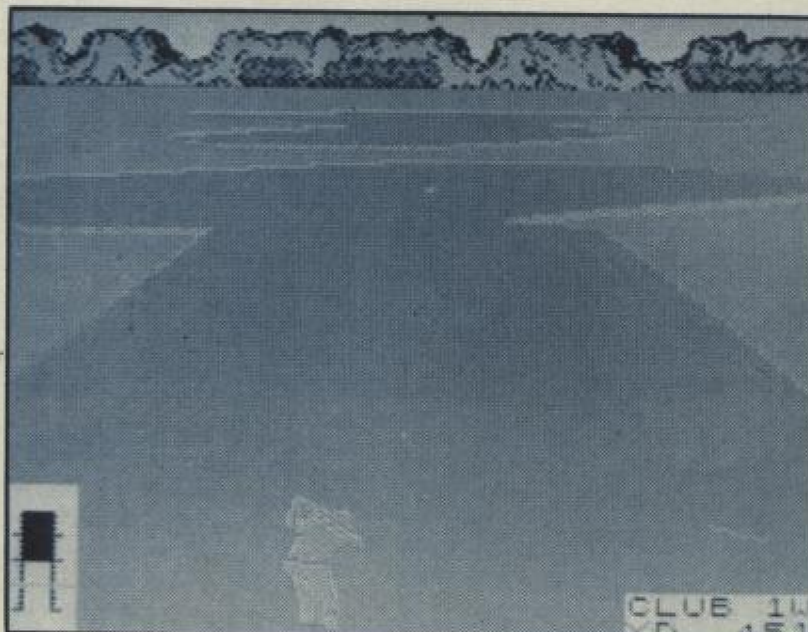
BEN

● *" The graphics are the main drawing point of games like this. And even though the courses take quite a while to draw out, I think it's worth it in the long run. The stroke indicator and speed gauge are very nice to begin with – but like most calculating computer games, once you've got the angles right you only need to use one setting. This is good fun if you play a decent opponent, but solo playing tends to get very boring. As with* Tenth Frame, Leader Board *hasn't really hit it off with the Spectrum, but it is a fascinating (if a little easy) golf simulation. "*

PAUL

● " I suppose everyone else has already said it, but here goes anyway, I think that golf games are a pretty boring end of the market. Having said that, *Leader Board*, while not being the most original game out, is actually quite playable. The graphics are very *Hobbit*-esque in the way in which they take ages to build up, but the finished result is well worth the effort. I found the Hook and Slice hard to control – especially on the higher levels, as it seemed to influence the ball more. There are only a few golf games on the Spectrum, but this one is just about the best. "

MIKE





COMMENTS

Control keys: joystick only
Joystick: Interface 2, Kempston
Use of colour: Plenty of greenery, simple,
Graphics: Nicely animated golfer, lacking in other respects
Sound: Minimal spot FX
Skill levels: Three
Screens: Four 18-hole courses
General rating: An excellent golfing simulation

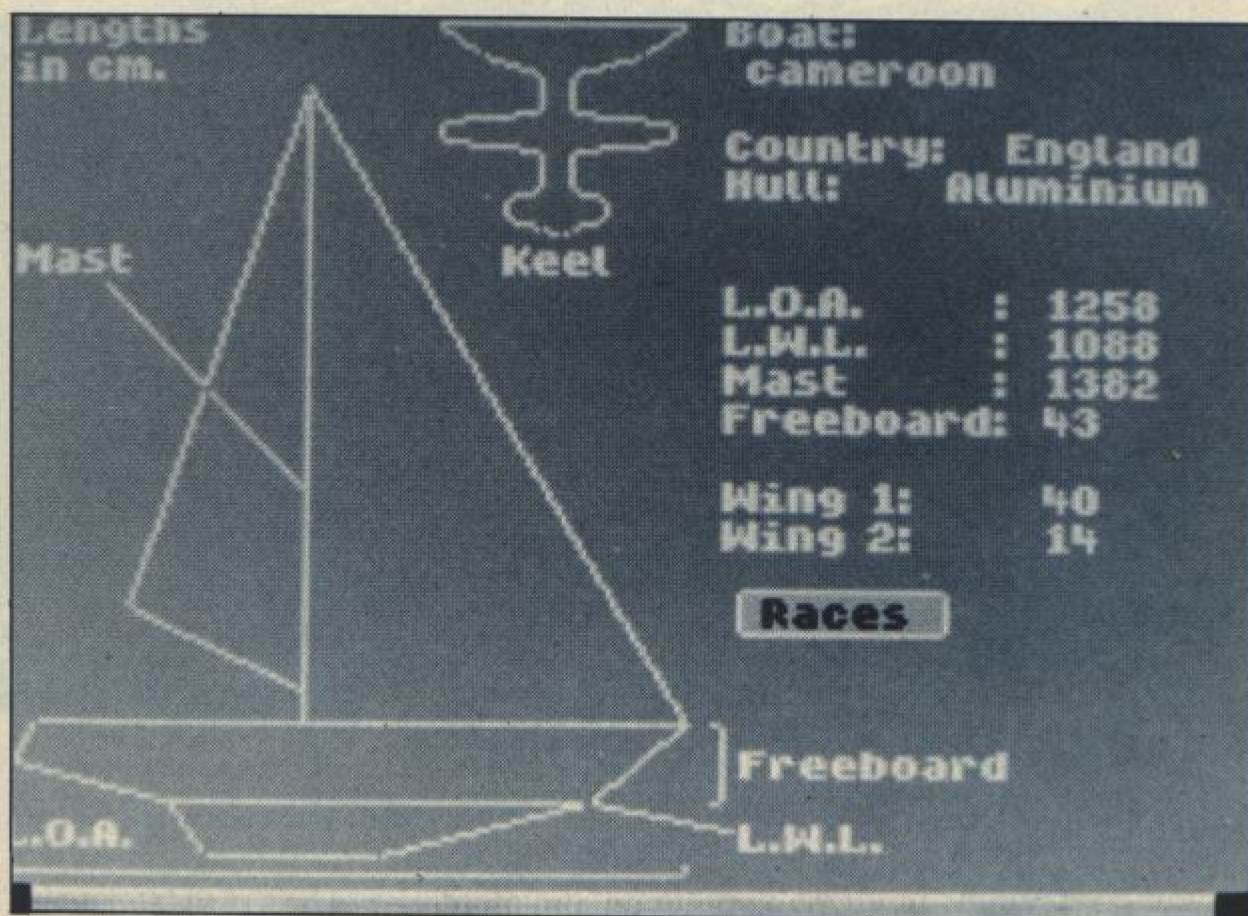
Presentation	71%
Graphics	82%
Playability	85%
Addictive qualities	72%
Value for money	75%
Overall	80%

SAILING

Producer: Activision
Retail Price: **£7.99**
Author: **Oxford Digital Enterprises**

Oxford Digital Enterprises have a knack of producing unusual activities on the Spectrum – remember *Trivial Pursuit*? Their latest release, *Sailing*, contains another unusual idea, allowing the player to take part in a yacht race – with the inlay boasting one of the simplest simulation control methods to date.

An initial options screen allows the level of play to be decided – determining the starting position in the league table, and hence the length of the game. This is closely followed by a ship designing section where the 'trim' of the vessel can be altered to suit the long range weather forecast. As the dimensions and structure of the yacht are changed, a blueprint is altered to show the craft's new shape.



Following these structural rearrangements, the race selection is made and the league table appears showing your league standing and that of your competitors. Your opponents are highlighted, and their ship's blueprints may be inspected to enable you to decide which team to choose. Having selected your adversary, the view changes to that from the prow of your ship, looking toward the first bouy, with your opponent abreast of you.

The ship is controlled by steering left and right, and raising and lowering the spinnaker to alter speed. This is achieved by pressing the select key and 'winching' the sail by rotating the joystick or keys – anti-clockwise to raise it and clockwise to lower.

The sea is represented in flight simulator fashion, with a moving horizon. The sea rolls up and down and changes colour, depending on the winds and other weather factors.

Beneath the viewscreen there is a display panel giving the relevant details of the yacht: wind speed and direction, status of the spinnaker and also a radar screen showing the positions of your ship, your opponent and the bouys which define the course of the race.

After five days of racing, you are given a week in which to trim your vessel in readiness for the next bout of races. Inspecting the league position and blueprints of the other competitors allows you to see how the different designs respond to the current weather conditions, enabling you to achieve optimum performance from your ship.

Coming up to the first marker bouy, is that Simon le Bon in front? Oh no it couldn't be . . . that yacht's still afloat!



CRITICISM

● **" Sailing with your Spectrum . . . whatever next? At first I was extremely dubious, faced with a topic I know very little about (the only sailing experience that I've ever had was on Ludlow boating lake!), and a sheet of poor instructions (even I know that you don't say boat when you're talking about yachting). However, I picked up the 'knack' of** Sailing **very quickly, and was helped by the masses of on-screen prompts and the ease at which you can manoeuvre your ship. The design/blueprint section is perhaps a little involved for the first time player, but it does add a lot to an experienced players game. Overall,** Sailing **is a pleasure to play. "**

BEN

● *" Sailing isn't one of the easiest sports to implement on a computer, and* ***ACTIVISION*** *have done well to pick out the exciting parts and discard the monotony. The view from the front of the yacht is extremely well designed – with the wave movement, in particular, superbly animated. I loved the design stage, although it's very simple and contains a fair amount of flicker. The presentation is extremely good – it contains a great title screen, easy to use menus and lots of cute scrolling messages. This is highly recommended, despite the slight lack of course variation. "*

PAUL

● " I'm not a simulation fan at all – but that makes no difference really, as *Sailing* is not a typical simulation at all. In short, it's a playable and competent game. The options are easy to use, and when complete navigational control has been accomplished you should have no problem in getting around the course. The sea's movements have been well executed, and the sight of other yachts speeding along the course adds a considerable amount of excitement. However, I'm a bit dubious about *Sailing*'s lasting appeal, as the excitement soon wears off. "

RICHARD



COMMENTS

Control keys: O/P left/right, Q/A up/down, Space to select
Joystick: Kempston, Interface 2, Cursor
Use of colour: not over-used but very effective
Graphics: clean, large, with excellent sea effect
Sound: some sea noises, no gulls, but some bleeps
Skill levels: three
Screens: four different displays
General rating: An unusual, and highly playable simulation of the sea.

Presentation	82%
Graphics	69%
Playability	80%
Addictive qualities	65%
Value for money	67%
Overall	76%

MAD NURSE

Producer: Firebird
Retail Price: **£1.99**
Author: **Software Creations**

A career in the health service is much like any other, you have to start at the bottom and work your way up. And as a nurse straight out of college and into your first hospital, life isn't going to be easy. All those howling babies screaming for food and water and milk and love and hugs and attention and nappy changes . . . it's enough to drive you round the twist!

You and your fellow trainees enter the hospital just as the last batch of students leave. They weren't very good . . . in fact they were really awful, the baby ward is in utter chaos. The little darlings have all clambered out of their cots and are roaming around willy nilly.

As you might expect, babies aren't the most responsible of creatures: they're horrible grimy pink things that make ghastly noises at the most ridiculous times at night, and they're very inquisitive. Plug sockets and mysterious boxes hold a fatal attraction for the little dears, and too much prodding and poking ends in a nasty shock for them – 240 volts to be precise.

The hospital wards are split into three levels, usually with a single cot on each floor, but occasionally slightly more densely populated. A counter on the status screen shows how many babies are on the loose. Starting in the shoes of Nurse Brenda Bumwipe, you chase after each one of the little horrors, pick them up in your caring arms and deposit them in their own little cots. But who wants to be cooped up in a horrid hospital cot? Not the babies that's for sure. Out they clamber and begin wandering again.

When you've finally collected up all the babies and replaced them in their cots, you can move on to the next ward. The wards rarely vary in layout, but as you proceed the baby population begins to grow, making it increasingly difficult to cope. It's just as well that you have three trainees to your credit, as there's no real job security in this hospital and too many lost babies results in early retirement for the offending nurse. If poor old Brenda gets the boot then Fiona Feedface steps in and takes over, her departure in turn makes room for the final trainee, Nina Nightnurse.



A nurse's work is never done – even as one baby is saved, another is falling down the lift shaft! Could this be General Hospital?

CRITICISM

● " Mad Nurse **won't keep any self-respecting games player happy for longer than a couple of goes – there just isn't enough variation in gameplay, and the intro bit at the start of every level is so monotonous. This reminds me of one of those hand-held game thingies so popular a few years back; the action consists of one task which gets progressively harder, and becomes progressively more tedious the longer that you play. Even the extremely sick nature of the plot doesn't appeal to me . . . which is quite unusual. I can't recommend this, even for the price it's unplayable triteness. "**

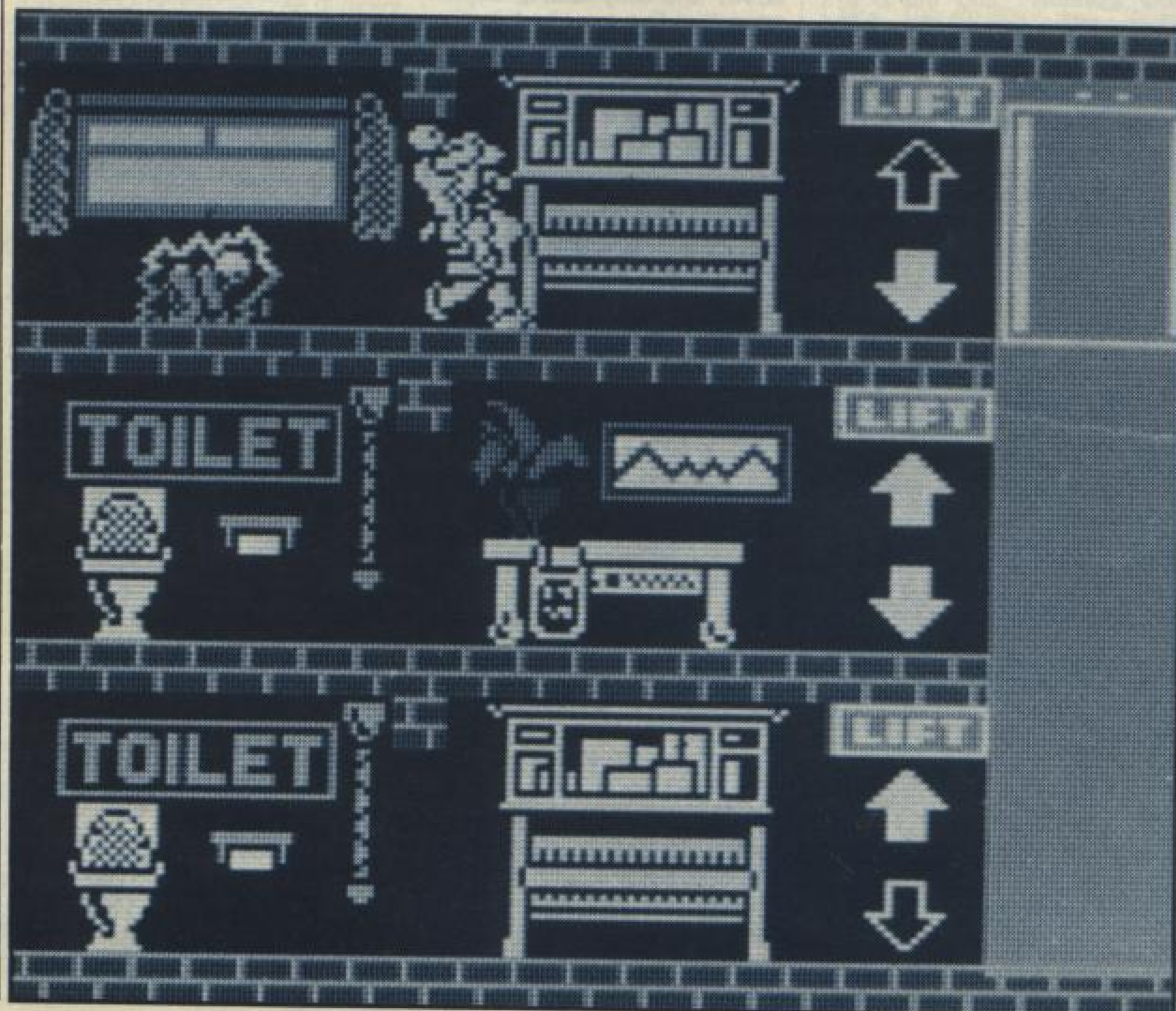
BEN

● *" I don't know what those folks at* FIREBIRD *see in this rubbish, every aspect of this game is dire. The graphics are full of attribute problems, the sound is extremely basic and there are no addictive elements at all. In fact one game was enough for me!* Mad Nurse *is also very sick – surely babies getting electrocuted and falling down lift shafts is only funny to a sick mind. Stick an '18' certificate on it. At least that would save most folks from buying it. "*

PAUL

● " *Mad Nurse* is occasionally funny, it's also very pretty to look at but it becomes *so* dull. There's nothing to make you return to it after it's been played once (well, that's not totally true, I did put it on twice just to have the pleasure of watching babies plummet to their deaths). The front end is also incredibly tedious and unnecessary; and there's no way of skipping through parts of it either. *Mad Nurse* is a disappointing release from FIREBIRD, it's simply a dull game covered up with a few neat graphics. "

RICHARD



COMMENTS

Control keys: Q/A up/down, O/P left/right and M to stun gas
Joystick: Kempston, Interface 2,
Use of colour: very good, but colour clash present
Graphics: well drawn, humorous and smooth
Sound: limited
Skill levels: one
General rating: A game with little to offer, relying on its 'sick' overtones to succeed.

Presentation	67%
Graphics	55%
Playability	37%
Addictive qualities	21%
Value for money	33%
Overall	31%

Nemesis THE WARLOCK

2000 A.D.



H•E•A•D

A fish and two rabbits are there for the taking, if only Heel can cross the room

Heels is gone to the dogs, but these Hush Puppies save him from the patrolling guards

O•V•E•R H•E•E•L•S



In a far distant galaxy, many light years away, lie four worlds enslaved by an an evil empire. On each, unrest simmers, suppressed by the dictatorial Emperor, who rules his territories from the planet Blacktooth. Neighbouring worlds look to the dark skies and wonder. In fear they send two spies from the planet Freedom, to kindle revolution upon the slave planets, and recover the crowns that have been lost. Only in this way can the might of the Empire be fettered.

The spies they send are Head and Heels, two bubble-bodied creatures living in unity. Both have different abilities, Head descended from flying reptiles and can jump twice his own height and guide himself through the air. On the other hand, Heels has legs like pistons, and is a powerful runner capable of leaping his own height. When together, Head sits like a lady's Sunday bonnet on Heels' head.

Their mission has not begun well, captured and separated, they have been imprisoned in the castle headquarters of the planet Blacktooth. All is not lost, but Head and Heels must use all of their skill to keep their eight lives intact, and escape from the strangeness of their prison surrounds.

Head and Heels can be moved independently with an illuminated icon showing which character you currently control, both icons are lit when the two are joined. The pair can move in four directions when on the ground, and upwards by using their jumping abilities. To escape from prison, both Head and Heels must pass through a series of rooms and corridors, some filled with such deadly obstacles as poisonous Marmite jars, electrified floors, and attacking monsters – touching these results in evaporation into a cloud of bubbles.

However, Head and Heels do encounter objects that can help them in their escape, though initially the purpose of each may not be obvious – Stuffed Rabbits give extra lives and abilities, Springs boing them through doorways, Prince Charles's head at last finds a purpose – being used as a sort of animated fork-lift truck, Reincarnation Fish give life after death (by returning the player to their collection point at the beginning of a new game), Doughnuts provide ammunition, and Teleports transport the two heroes from room to room. Only through trial and error can they hope to successfully use such equipment to best advantage and safely leave the castle.

Because of their separate and individual talents, it is occasionally necessary for Head and Heels to split up in order to negotiate certain obstacles. Decisions of this nature should be made when a puzzle appears to be accomplished by the dual creature, but in general it's usually a good idea to keep the pair together.

Once outside the prison walls, Head and Heels have to decide whether to return to their home planet Freedom, or join together as a team, and use their individual skills to continue their search for the lost crowns of the slave planets. Whatever they decide, they must make their way to Moonbase Headquarters, and teleport themselves away.

For any one slave planet to fall from Blacktooth's grasp would be disruptive, but its expansionist plans would roll inevitably on. Such is the Empire's power that with the slow passing of time, a single liberated planet would be re-enslaved, and its inhabitants crushed once more. Therefore all of the slave planets must be set free before the Empire's power can be finally destroyed,.

Egyptus, with its city of huge pyramid tombs must tumble; the harsh and mountainous prison planet of Penitentiary must fall; Safari, the densely vegetated hunting-planet, whose natives live in wooden forts and set traps for the unwary, must be prised from the Empire's grip; and Book World, the vast planetary library of cowboy books to which only the Emperor's minions have access, must be turned against its master. On each the crown must be found and collected.

When the crowns of all four slave planets are collected, the Emperor can be killed, and with him the evil Blacktooth Empire. The emperor's death signals the end of Head and Heels' task, and they can return home to their planet Freedom, to be acclaimed as heroes.

Producer: Ocean
Retail Price: **£7.95**
Authors: **Jon Ritman and Bernie Drummond**

CRITICISM

" There have been quite a few games of this style lately – and pretty as they are, many have been severely lacking in gameplay. Happily, the two programmers have worked extremely hard to make Head over Heels **one of the most fun to play and absorbing games available at the moment. The problems are all excellent . . . some are fairly easy while others require a lot of thought, time and patience. The graphics are awesome, the meticulous attention to detail is similar to that in** Nosferatu**, but the overall effect is much better. The sound could do with a little tuning but it's generally good, there are loads of effects during the game and the tune on the title screen is bearable. Head over Heels is a must for any self respecting Spectrum owner – what more can I say? "**

BEN

CRITICISM

" This is definitely the best Ritman/Drummond game yet – it's even better than Batman! Head Over Heels **is the cutest arcade adventure yet, the characters are extremely detailed, very lifelike and cuddly. There are loads of puzzles to be solved, ranging from very easy to particularly hard brain teasers, which means it will appeal to all types of people. The sound effects on the 48K version are just as appealing as the 128K, although the tunes are a bit restricted. The presentation is superb, as we've come to expect from all Ritman/Drummond games.** Head Over Heels **is one of the most addictive, playable, cuddly, cute and fun games ever. Miss it at your peril! "**

PAUL

CRITICISM

" Wow! this is *the* ultimate game! Head over Heels **has some fantastic graphics; it proves to all disbelievers that there is still something left in the forced perspective 3D world; the characters are superbly designed, and the animation has to be seen to be believed! The front end is brilliantly designed, and everything fits together perfectly, bringing some of Jon Ritman's excellent ideas to full fruition. The playability is beyond compare, as too are its addictive qualities –** Head over Heels **is excellent value for money, and a must for anyone's collection. "**

MIKE



CRITICISM

Head Over Heels is offered no real gameplay enhancement by the 128K Spectrum – there are no extra screens, problems or worlds. The added extra, as usual, is musical – there's a tune that plays throughout, which tends to get on your nerves after a couple of hours. For those with sensitive ears there's an 'adjust the sound' option so you can turn it off altogether or revert to the 48K effects. A couple of changes have been made to the Front End to make things a little prettier, but maybe a few extra rooms or problems would have been a better addition. Despite the lack of improvement it's still highly recommended!

COMMENTS

Control keys: defineable, up, down, left, right, jump, swap, pick up/drop, shoot
Joystick: Kempston, Fuller, Interface 2
Use of colour: monochromatic playing areas, with colourful icons
Graphics: excellently detailed characters and settings
Sound: adequate title tune and bright atmospheric effects
Skill levels: one
Screens: over 300
General rating: The best fun you're likely to have with a Spectrum for quite some time.

Presentation	90%
Graphics	97%
Playability	96%
Addictive qualities	95%
Value for money	91%
Overall	**97%**

ARKANOID

Producer: Imagine
Retail Price: **£7.95**
Author: **Mike Lamb**

A major interstellar catastrophe has occurred! The giant spaceship Arkanoid has exploded and a small shuttle craft, The Vaus, has scrambled away, only to be sucked into a void inhabited by 'The Dimension Changer'. This horrid creature has transported The Vaus into a strange dimension – a void consisting of 32 block-patterned screens. In order to escape, The Vaus has to move from one screen to another clearing each screen of blocks, finally confronting the Dimension Changer on Level 33 in a battle to the death.

The Vaus sits at the bottom of the screen, and a ball is launched into the playing area. This ball bounces around the screen and ricochets off the sides, destroying the blocks on contact. The player moves The Vaus left and right, attempting to prevent the ball from leaving the screen.

Not all of the blocks explode on first contact. Some take a more severe beating before they disappear, and others drop a spinning capsule which can be collected to gain a feature – such as an expanded bat, a slower ball, the ability to catch and relaunch the ball, a laser to shoot at the bricks, an escape route to the next screen, an extra life and the ability to split the ball into three separate spheres.

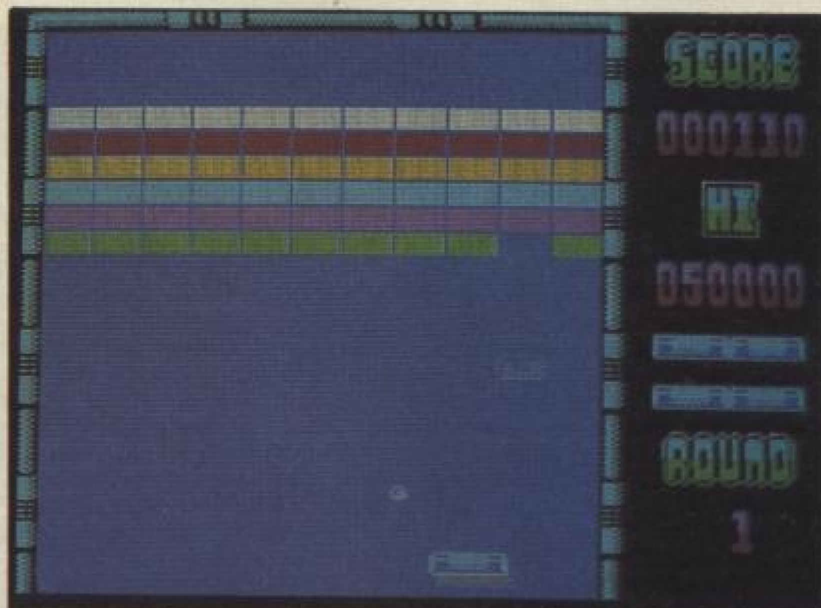
Seemingly harmless aliens float about, but despite their appearance they pose an indirect threat to the Vaus – when one of these wandering obstacles is hit by the ball, it explodes and sends the ball flying off in the opposite direction.

Failing to stop the ball from leaving the screen loses a life, although extra lives can be earned at regular point intervals – or by collecting a capsule marked with 'P'.

CRITICISM

● " **Aaaaaaaaaagh this is terrible – I'm addicted to a badly programmed** Breakout **variant, my street cred is never going to recover! The programmers have a lot to answer for, the collision detection is awful (a major problem for a** Breakout **game), and the program changes speed at the most illogical moments. To top it all there's a scenario – that's right, a scenario! Could you think of anything more irrelevant to put in a game like this? You have to sit through 30 seconds of tedious waffle at the start of each game. But despite all this the gameplay is still there, and the whole thing is disturbingly compelling. However I'm sure that** Arkanoid **will lose its appeal fairly quickly.** "

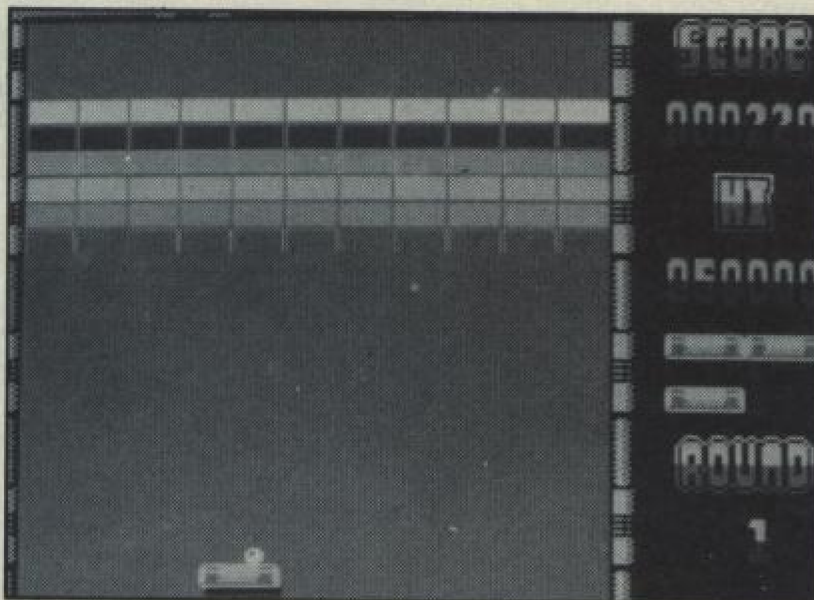
BEN



There you are, still on the first screen, and a 'catch' capsule falls towards the waiting Vaus.

● " *Whatever next! Will flares be back in fashion this year? It seems a distinct possibility if the fashion industry follows* IMAGINE*'s example to the computer industry.* Arkanoid *contains no addictive qualities at all. It's extremely boring to play and very easy to leave on the shelf. The* Thru The Wall *game that comes free with a Spectrum is more fun to play than this. Graphics are very simply defined, and poorly animated.* "

PAUL



● " What can I say? It's something like five years since the release of the Spectrum, and someone is still trying to flog a version of the game that was given away with the very first machine! Not only that, but this version isn't what I would expect after five years of development. The additions to the bat are great, but the game really falls down due to the speed variations. Somehow, though, someone has managed to put some addictivity into a game whose programming defies such a compliment. Generally, a slightly above average product that could have converted well from the arcade machine, but has been let down by poor programming. "

MIKE

COMMENTS

Control keys: left CAPS SHIFT-V, right B-SPACE, fire A-L
Joystick: Kempston, Interface 2
Use of colour: bright and attractive
Graphics: smooth but unimaginative
Sound: spot FX, not tune
Skill levels: one
Screens: 33
General rating: Above average, and surprisingly addictive considering its ancient gameplay.

Presentation	62%
Graphics	51%
Playability	61%
Addictive qualities	60%
Value for money	45%
Overall	59%

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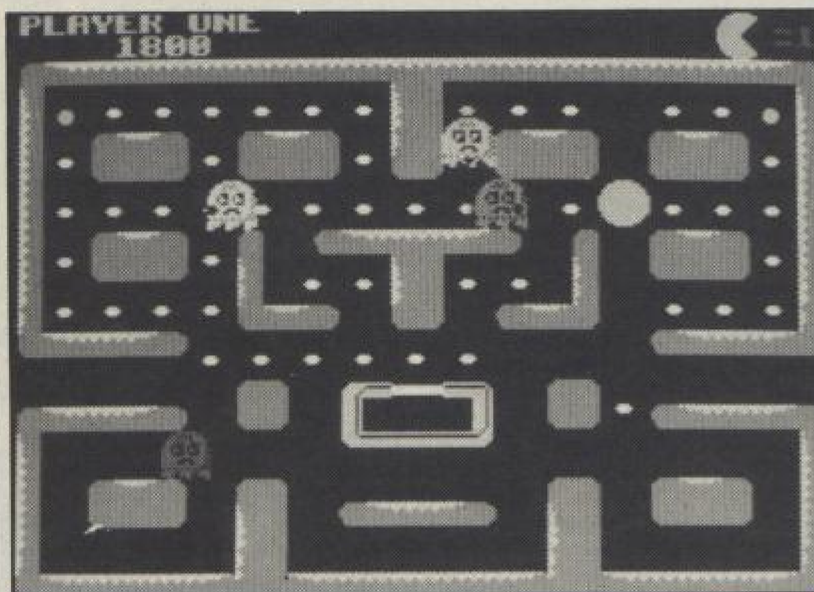
CLASSIC MUNCHER

Producer: Bubble Bus
Retail Price: **£1.99**
Author: **Nick James**

BUBBLE BUS SOFTWARE's latest release bears a remarkable similarity to that age-old arcade favourite *Pacman*. Hang on a minute . . . it is *Pacman*!

The program consists of a series of six unique screens which repeat infinitely. You control a small creature with an insatiable appetite, whom you guide through the on-screen mazes. To progress to the next screen, all of the dots strewn about the maze's passages have to be eaten – with this task accomplished by simply moving over them.

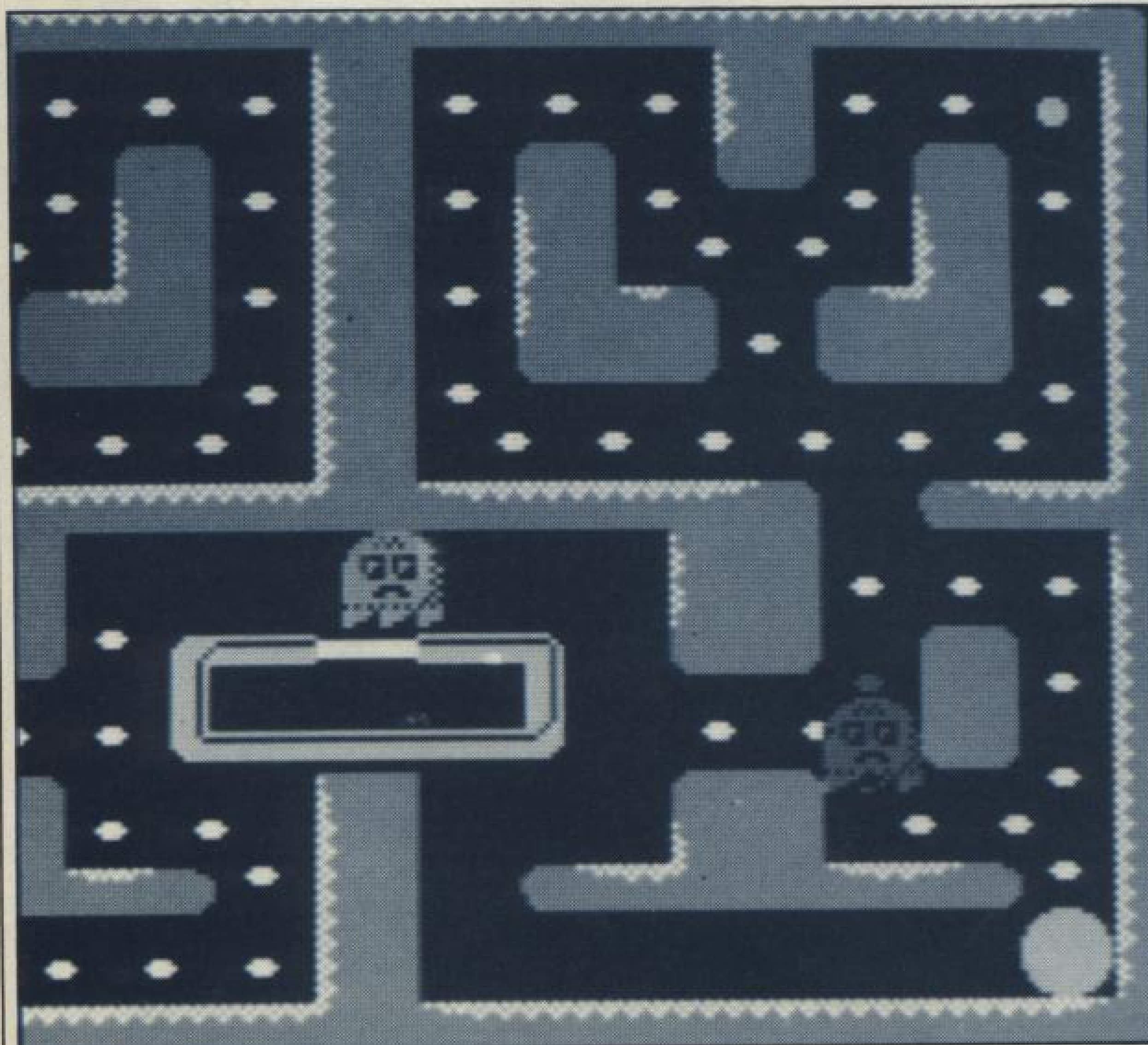
Four ghosts chase you around the mazes, trying to touch you, and thus stealing away one of your three lives. To combat the spooks there are Power Pills placed around the screens. When these pills are eaten, you become temporarily immune and can turn on the ghosts, improving your score with each one that you eat. When a ghost is eaten, it returns to the 'home' square in the centre of the screen. It then reforms, and the relentless pursuit commences yet again.



Dot Gobblers are an old genre indeed, but perhaps there's something about the game itself that appeals.

Letters forming the words 'EXTRA' or 'BONUS' occasionally appear within the mazes. When successfully gobbled they appear at the top of the screen, and are worth 100 points each. Forming the entire word however, earns either an extra life or a substantial points boost – depending on the letters collected. 100 points are also awarded upon the eating of any item of fruit that appears on screen. Each dot is worth 10 points, the Power Pills score 100 points and devouring a ghost is also worth 100 points. Your current score, the amount of lives remaining, and the fruit and letters collected, are displayed at the top of the screen.

When all six screens are completed, the action moves up a level and back to the first screen – but this time the pace is furious, and the ghosts are far less friendly.



CRITICISM

● " Gosh, a tedious version of an ancient arcade favourite! I've got stacks of games like this gathering dust on the shelf, they've all been loaded up once and then never played again. The graphics are average for this type of game, there are one or two types of flickery character on the usual drab screen. The sound on the other hand is quite good, there's a jolly tune on the title screen and there are a few munchy effects throughout. The gameplay is much the same as you would expect, fun at first but boring after a few goes. If you're a Pacman fan (that makes you about twenty-two) this will probably keep you quiet for a while – but I wouldn't recommend it. "

BEN

● " *Yeah! We're going back to our roots, man! A different storyline maybe, but the same old game.* Classic Muncher *is nowhere near as good as* MASTERTRONIC*'s version, but most of the features are still there. The grids are well drawn, and the characters move smoothly without any flicker. The title tune is quite good, but the sound effects aren't too useful. Having said all that, no matter how good the gameplay is this concept is a bit long in the tooth to be released these days – even on a budget label.* "

PAUL

● " Ha! What a nostalgia trip this one is! It really does take us all back to the days of the good old Atari VCS consoles – those were the days, eh? Unfortunately, Spectrum games have come on a good bit since those days! *Classic Muncher* is a memory that I'm sure most of us could do without. It isn't overly addictive, the graphics are very outdated, and basically, I would recommend leaving it alone. "

MIKE

COMMENTS

Control keys: definable, preset: Q/A up/down, O/P left/right
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor
Use of colour: drab, and unimaginative
Graphics: unsurprising
Sound: average
Skill levels: one
Screens: six
General rating: Another uninspired attempt at a worn out idea.

Presentation	47%
Graphics	38%
Playability	53%
Addictive qualities	32%
Value for money	46%
Overall	**41%**

SHADOW SKIMMER

Producer: The Edge
Retail Price: **£7.95**
Author: **John Marshall**

A routine inspection of the exterior of an interstellar liner goes disastrously wrong. The liner's computers malfunction and the ship's second officer is trapped outside in his personal scout craft, or Shadow Skimmer. To return to the safety of the main ship he needs to make his way to the main personal hatch, at the far end of the mother ship. And that means avoiding the ship's security and defence systems, systems that cannot be closed down by Galactic Command.

The exterior hull of an interstellar liner is a complicated, and hostile environment. Radar controlled defences sweep the ship's face for intruding meteors and asteroids, whilst robot craft scavenge across the ship's skin. These systems are non-selective, the Shadow Skimmer stranded outside the mother craft is now the intruder – and is sure to be treated as such. Survival is only possible if the Shadow Skimmer can be piloted across each section of the ship's hull, and its defences countered. No easy task, for each system has been designed to be almost undetectable and virtually indestructible.

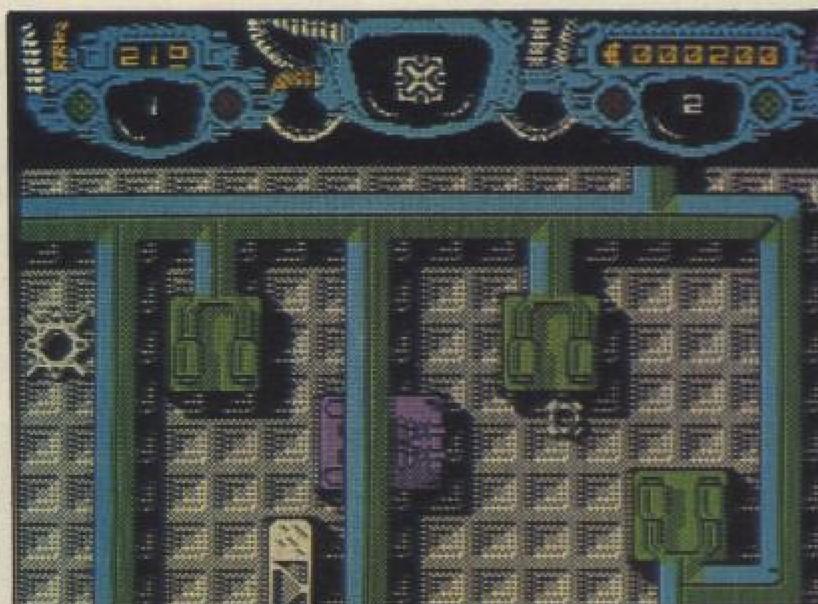
The Shadow Skimmer can be piloted to left and right, upwards and down, and can even flip over and fly on its back, in order to negotiate obstacles and barriers that would otherwise be too low. However when in this flying mode, it is more vulnerable to attack, and manoeuvres must be sharper and quicker if it's to survive.

The Skimmer isn't totally defenceless. Three energy shields help, but they're destroyed by repeated blasts from protecting robot craft or radar systems – and with all three gone, so is the game. Even if the Skimmer's shields are not breached, the craft is easily thrown out of control by blast impact, or on hitting a patrolling robot craft. A display indicates how many shields remain, and a Damage Report panel signals how close you are to losing one.

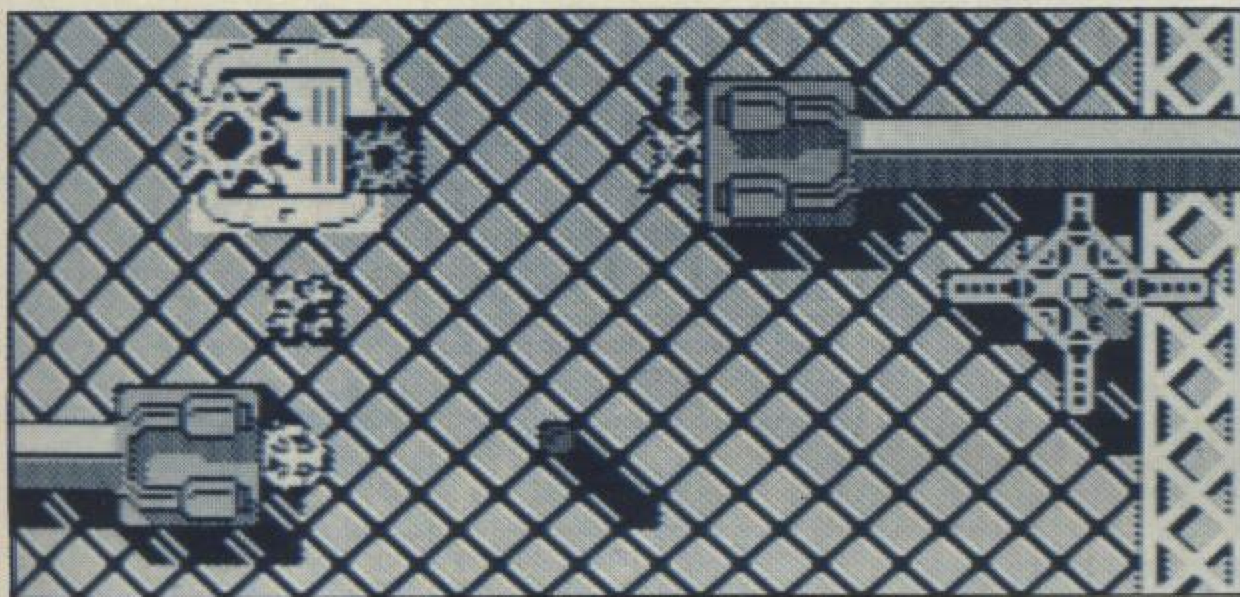
Powerful pulse lasers are capable of destroying weapons systems found in the mother ship's three hull sectors. In each sector, the defence system must be destroyed before progress can be made to the next. This is done by identifying crucial defence objectives and blasting them with a laser pulse. When a defence objective has been destroyed, barriers previously impassable no longer cause a problem, and the Skimmer can move on.

Forrays under the outer skin of the hull are occasionally necessary. Here, the heart of the defence system must be located, and destroyed before returning to the 'surface'. This is done by hovering above a hatchway, opening it by firing, and moving through.

Once the third sector of the mother ship's hull is reached, the main personal hatch can be found and through this entry made into the mother ship . . . and safety.



Shadow skimmer on the far left explores a mystery space craft.



CRITICISM

● " THE EDGE **have been disappointing lately,** Fairlight II **was pretty but unplayable and** Shao Lins Road **was messy – it also lost out on the gameplay front.** Shadow Skimmer **follows the same trend I'm afraid – there are plenty of ace graphics and a fab tune on the title screen, but the gameplay is annoying and occasionally repellent. The three levels are fairly easy so it shouldn't take too long to play through them, therefore, if you do persevere** Shadow Skimmer **won't appeal for long. All in all I can't recommend this, it wouldn't keep your average gamesplayer happy for longer than a day or two. "**

BEN

● " Hmm. I'm not sure what *Sinclair User* were doing when they said it 'will beat the pants off everything else around for ages,' but still, everyone's entitled to their opinions. The packaging is very nice, and the game graphics are pretty, and well coloured; therefore the screen shots (and *SU*'s quote) might persuade some people to buy a game which I suspect they might not enjoy a lot. That said, *Shadow Skimmer* is a reasonable game; the ship movement is excellent, very smooth, but when you collide with an enemy, or a missile, it's quite easy to lose your bearings as you go zooming uncontrollably around the nearby screens. All the presentation and programming is there, but the game itself isn't the greatest concept ever. I found I was starting to get bored after only an hour, which isn't really worth spending £7.95 for. "

MIKE

● " Shadow Skimmer *contains some of the most attractive bas-relief graphics of any Spectrum game. However the game contains little to do and gets boring after a while. There's too much inertia involved for quick and accurate playing; and I don't like the idea of being thrown around the room whenever you're hit by an enemy. It's offputting and often results in the inescapable situation of being stuck between two aliens. The inter-deck stages are a good idea and make a change from the complicated graphics of the decks. Even though I played* Shadow Skimmer *for quite a while I could find little to do in it. Worth a look though. "*

PAUL

COMMENTS

Control keys: definable, preset: Z/X left/right, O/K up/down, zero to fire, Caps Shift to flip
Joystick: Kempston, Interface 2, Cursor
Use of colour: very good, varied
Graphics: excellent, imaginative and well drawn
Sound: good tune, reasonable FX
Skill levels: one
Screens: three scrolling stages, plus inter-deck game
General rating: Interesting and above average idea gets spoiled by game elements and a lack of playing scope.

Presentation	74%
Graphics	85%
Playability	61%
Addictive qualities	61%
Value for money	60%
Overall	62%

BOMBJACK II

Producer: Elite
Retail Price: **£7.95**
Author: **Andy Williams**

Bombjack's supercharged superhero returns in this follow-up to the highly popular platform game. However, instead of defusing carelessly discarded bombs, Jack now lives in a free enterprise society, collecting bags of gold as a way of life.

As in the original, the action takes place in over forty different locations – ranging from the Taj Mahal to the lava pits of a distant planet. The objective is jump from platform to platform, collecting as many sacks of gold as possible. These are either open or closed, and Jack takes this into account when choosing the order in which they are to be picked up. Simply touching a sack adds it to Jack's collection.

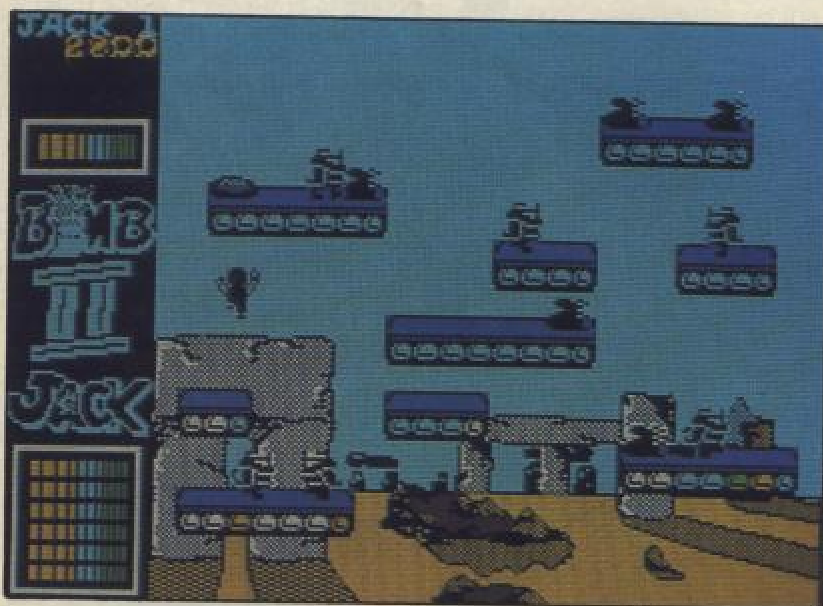
Open sacks containing flashing gold coins are worth double points, and it is these that are most useful to our favourite gold-digger in his quest to become a millionaire. As soon as one open sack is collected another appears, and collecting six or more earns a large bonus. Collect ten open sacks, and an extra life is added to Jack's original three. Choosing the wrong sack to begin with means that the rest are collected out of order, causing problems and consequently decreasing the eventual score.

Wherever Jack goes, his simple desire for wealth is ruthlessly obstructed by obnoxious spoilsports, who do everything in their power to ensure that he remains a pauper. These guardian creatures resent Jack's quest for their precious nest-eggs, and try to push him from their platforms. Initially, mean tadpoles patrol jealously – in turn, they mutate into armour plated rhinos, which become stronger and more intelligent. Give these half a chance, and they are transformed into creatures similar to Jack himself, and as active as a box of fleas. At first these irritating little bounders leap aimlessly, but if Jack is slow they begin to home in.

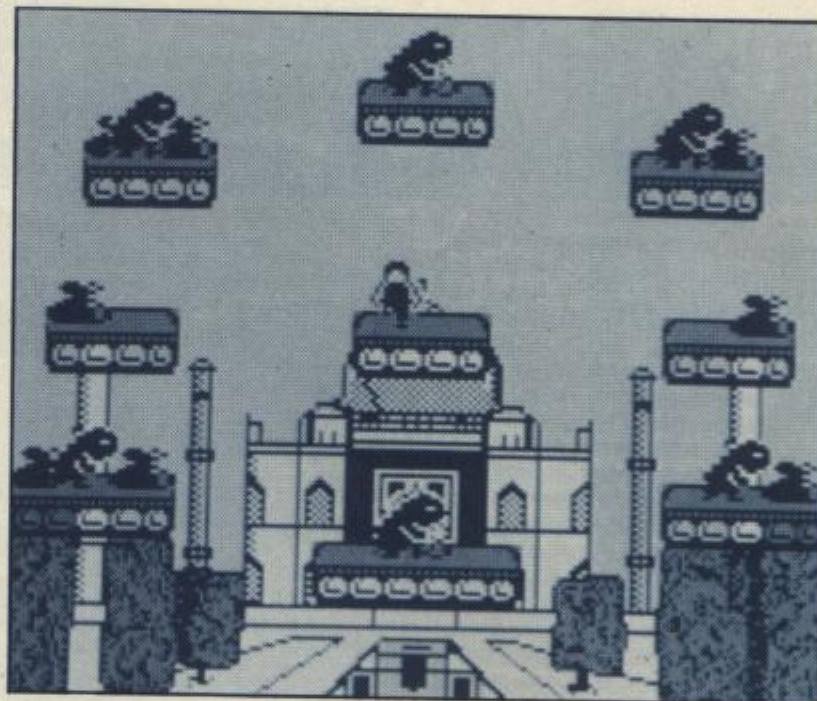
The correct route for Jack to follow is not always obvious. Some sacks can be tantalisingly close, but frustratingly hard to reach – trial and error is the only way to find the easiest path. Should Jack have to use a short platform guarded by a creature, he must be exceptionally quick to avoid being tumbled to his death. Memorising routes enables you to move him quickly, without the need for time-consuming thought.

However, our would-be millionaire cannot always move to a platform, avoid a guard and acquire a sack by sheer speed alone. Sometimes, he too must use a little brawn and push the bizarre beasts from their platforms. Though Jack can pack more into his jumping than Daley Thompson, he does have limited energy, (perhaps he doesn't drink enough Lucozade?). Physical contact with a patroller drains our vitamin-packed leaper of energy, so by waiting until a guard is near a platform edge, he can push using the minimum of effort. But beware, a beast can bundle back, and engaging in any prolonged argy-bargy only proves that Jack needs to go on a body-building course. Check how our hero is standing up to the strain by carefully watching his energy levels – displayed on the left hand side of the screen.

If he doesn't feel like getting too intimate, Jack can take the easy way out and knife his enemy to death – repeated stabbing does the job twice as fast. However, don't kill an opposing creature on your start platform – he just reappears, and gives Jack an even harder time.



The Stonehenge guards are armour-plated Rhinos, big grey wrinkly ones . . .



CRITICISM

● " Bombjack **was one of my all-time favourite games, so I was really looking forward to this sequel. Once again my hopes have been dashed . . . it's not that the end product has turned out badly, it hasn't – but it isn't really a patch on the original. The graphics are only adequate, the undersized characters are well animated and the backgrounds are nicely drawn, but I feel that Jack could have done with a little more detail (and his cape seems to have disappeared). The gameplay is where this really falls down, it takes too long to get any 'feel'. If you haven't already got** Bombjack, **then this represents excellent value for money – if you have, I suggest that you stick with it. "**
BEN

● *" I didn't find* Bombjack II *as compulsive as its predecessor, as I found myself getting bored with it very quickly. The graphics aren't as good as the original, Jack seems to have been forgotten and made to jump around in his underwear. The backgrounds are above average, but don't really make much difference to play. It's a great idea of* ELITE*'s to throw* Bombjack *in with the package – but I do get the feeling that most people will enjoy the freebie more than the actual product. Presentation is very much in the* Bombjack *style, and they still haven't included a redefine keys option.* Bombjack *II is more of an upgrade than a new game – in simple terms, it's more of the same. "*
PAUL

● " *Bombjack* was a great little game; but something appears to be missing from its successor, and the original's addictive qualities have been lost along the way. Although the backgrounds have been improved from the simple two-dimensional pictures of the original, *Bombjack II*'s characters are far inferior. Maybe it's a little unfair to compare the follow up to what was such a superb game, but I suspect that ELITE are aware of this inferiority, and have included the original as a form of compensation. Anyone who doesn't possess a copy of *Bombjack* ought to take advantage of a very good bargain – this however doesn't make up for the fact that *Bombjack II* is something of a disappointment. "
MIKE



COMMENTS

Control keys: Q up, A down, N left, M right and X stab
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor, Interface 2
Use of colour: colourful backgrounds spoiled by monochromatic characters
Graphics: detailed scenery, but poor characters
Sound: no tune, but nice effects throughout
Skill levels: one
Screens: over 40
General rating: A poor follow-up, which loses its pedecessor's sparkle.

Presentation	75%
Graphics	66%
Playability	74%
Addictive qualities	71%
Value for money	87%
Overall	71%

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A DAY AT THE SEASIDE



A Tuesday in out-of-season Blackpool is pretty much like a Tuesday in any other large British town. A few shoppers scurry along windswept streets, traffic wardens prowl the kerbs and litter blows along the pavement. Not really a place to visit. But this Tuesday was a bit special – it was the first day of an Amusements Exhibition, and the Winter Gardens complex was packed to capacity with high-tech entertainment hardware.

Gary Penn, Graeme Kidd and Ben Stone spent the day amongst the 'Amusement With Prizes' machines (Fruit Machines – for the uninitiated), side-stepped the candyfloss machines and giant inflatable kiddie castles, tried to ignore the legion of jukeboxes and got to grips with the latest arcade games. Ben's eyes widened as he realised that everything was set on free play – he'd brought a stack of 10 pees all the way from Ludlow !

It was a trade exhibition, so the talk was all about margins, multiple-site operations and the latest boards from the Orient. There were more business suits than you would ever expect to see at a computer show – and the sight of a middle-aged businessman whooping with glee as he whizzed round in the cockpit of Konami's Le Mans driving simulator for the third time was strange indeed. Especially as there was a longish queue of besuited executives fighting and doing shady deals to procure the next turn . . . "Let me through, I'm a reviewer" cried Gary Penn, intimidating all and sundry with his spiky haircut . . .



The Dunlop advertisement encountered a little way into the race. Looks like Mr Penn's going to be recalled to the Pits before long . . .



Back to the Pits, with mechanics standing round in designer overalls. A chance to view the course map

WEC LE MANS 24

Konami's officially endorsed racing simulation game pits you against the gruelling course of the Le Mans 24-hour endurance race. Seated in a large cockpit, part of a fibreglass mock-up of a Porsche, and surrounded by dials and gauges, you are equipped with a gearshift (low or high), a brake and accelerator and, of course, a steering wheel. Press the start button and the race begins . . .

Le Mans is an exhilarating experience – part driving game, part fairground ride. As the car on the screen takes the video corners the whole cockpit swings, spinning round on its axis and throwing you around in the driving seat. Leave the tarmac or nudge the kerb and the ride gets distinctly bumpy. There are limits to realism, however . . . should you crash the car, the angle of view on the screen changes and you see the car on screen, spinning through the air. The game doesn't actually throw you out of the cockpit – safety considerations mean that totalling the video Porsche only leads to a succession of violent judders and lurches. There is also a smaller, more cramped version of the cockpit which doesn't throw its passenger about quite as much.

Each lap has to be completed in a qualifying time, or you are recalled to the Pits and the game ends. Keep up with the pace however, and before too long night begins to fall and you're driving beneath an impressive scrolling skyscape, lit by the rays of the setting sun. Then the lights on the side of the track come on and your night driving skills are put to the test . . .

OUT RUN

Sega offer four versions of their new driving game – the basic machine features a brake, accelerator and fixed steering wheel as well as the high/low gearshift; the next model up features a steering column that judders and shakes when you leave the road or crash, and then there are two cockpit versions which have you sitting in a car that judders and leans as you take corners or crash. In the cockpit versions, stereo speakers mounted behind the driver blast out music and sound effects, enhancing the already excellent illusion of road racing.

At the start of *Out Run* you can choose the musical accompaniment you'd like to have as you zoom along the scrolling roadway. Once the radio's been tuned it's on to the start and away. The roadway curves and dips as you drive a hot street machine along the course – the 3D scrolling is wonderful. Trucks and cars have to be avoided, and every so often the track forks – there are five finishing points and it's up to you to choose a route. Depending on the choices made at junctions, you can be involved in a harrowing race through a rock canyon, travel under a series of rocky bridges or cross the desert delights of sandy dunes.

Out Run is highly polished – the music is excellent, and a host of neat touches have been added. Apart from the impressive



After a crash, the car is replaced on the road and it's time to go for a standing start . . .

graphics and sound, attention has been paid to every little detail: for instance you have a female passenger in the car who isn't averse to a bit of back-seat driving – she wags an admonishing finger as you both sit on the road after a crash. The basic game is neat, the mid-range version adds an extra dimension of realism with the feedback from the steering column and the complete cockpit implementation is a thrilling experience. While the latest **Konami** race game offers a neat driving simulation and provides a different 'camera view' when you crash, *Out Run* has the edge in both game-play and presentation when the two cockpit games are compared. Somehow the gyrations of the *Le Mans* module are disorientating rather than realistic; *Out Run*'s moving cockpit is more believable, and the added touches make the whole package more atmospheric.



As you shift gear, smoke billows from the rear tyres and at 98km/hr the palm trees that flank the road are a blur as far as our camera is concerned

NIGHT STOCKER

The front of your techno motor looks a bit battered as you confront another houseful of snipers at the end of a level. Fortunately, the crystal collector is unharmed



Bally Sente are also offering a new driving game – but one with a difference. Dispensing with the accelerator and brake pedal, **Bally** have added a gun! You drive over a steadily scrolling landscape, steering with one hand and shooting from the hip with the other.

The front of the car is fitted with a claw-like device that's used to pick up crystals as you drive over them. Green crystals add ten shots to your pistol's magazine, while the blue crystals found on the higher levels are good for an additional 50 shots.

Hurtling through the hazardous terrain, avoiding mines and craters – the front of the car gets to look more and more battered with each successive collision, and if you're really careless and hit a mine with the crystal-collector it's impossible to collect extra ammunition. Red crystals, when found, go some way to repairing the damage – but if the collector's out of action . . .

A veritable host of flying, bouncing and crawling meanies populate the game, including Idors, Dyads, Drosians, Cruisers, Bouncers, Speeders . . . and so on. Mutant bugs flit across the screen on the first level, occasionally attempting to sit on the front of the car and inflict damage by nibbling away at the paintwork. Quick thinking and an itchy trigger finger are required to bring their destructive meal to a close.

At the end of every perilous section of terrain the car draws to a halt outside a strange, futuristic building. Snipers pop up in the windows and it's up to you to blow them away before the car sustains even more front-end damage.

Night Stocker is an unusual game that combines the elements of shoot 'em up with a fairly straightforward driving game – the fact that you have to do two things at once makes it frustratingly addictive, well worth a few 10 pees.

SOLDIER OF LIGHT

Straightforward shoot 'em ups were in abundance at the show. **Taito**'s *Soldier Of Light* casts you in the role of a futuristic space hero by the name of Xain – a sort of *Green Beret* in space, who has to put up with a few *Ghosts 'n' Goblins*-type problems.

Five planets are under attack from an evil invading army, and your first task is to decide which planet to save first. The five worlds are all fundamentally different – the fighting takes place in a jungle populated by evil flying insectoids on one planet, underwater on another, and against a dangerous volcanic landscape on a third.

Having selected a planet to clean up, Xain is transported there in a space craft and deposited at



Poor old Xain – he's just lost a life doing battle with the enemy HQ at the end of a planet



Fighting through the jungle scenery, Xain pauses in amazement – there are no marauding meanies on the screen with him!

the start of a horizontally scrolling landscape. The shuttle takes off and you're on your own. Dressed in a special suit, the hero can perform a two-stage jump, kneel, lie flat or scamper to the right. The suit's protective powers sustain up to sixteen hits from the mobile creatures that lurk on the planets but can only resist a single shot fired by one of the enemy troopers – so they have to be disposed of promptly if lives are not to be lost.

Extra firepower can be collected, and comes in handy when you confront the enemy base at the end of each landscape. Destroy the evil invaders' emplacement, and the planet is liberated – so it's back into the shuttle and off to another warzone.

Overall, *Soldier of Light* is an attractive, if rather unoriginal shoot 'em up. It should prove moderately entertaining if not totally gripping.

SIDE ARMS

This is another shoot 'em up in the classic mould of *Salamander*, featuring a couple of superhero soldiers pitting their wits against an evil warlord and his minions.

Starting out solo, you blast away furiously at the flying horrors that enter from the right of the screen – and every so often a despatched alien leaves a pod behind. Collecting a pod conveys extra equipment or alters the game-play subtly. An orbiting defence system and extra firepower may be acquired, the speed of the scroll modified or the effect of your weapon altered. Collecting one specific object allows a composite soldier to be created, as two characters merge 'Transformers style' to form a super-powerful fighting machine.

At the end of each Stage a particularly powerful enemy machine has to be destroyed before the heroes can continue their quest to defeat the Bad Guy.

Side Arms is an unoriginal, but attractive and fairly playable addition to the already crowded range of *Salamander*-inspired shoot 'em ups.

The orbiting orbs are a mere blur as the camera shutter records the two space heroes in their unified form



GRYZOR



The hunky hero fights in open country. He's so butch, he doesn't even need a shirt . .

One of two brand new **Konami** games on show, *Gryzor* is a hectic shoot 'em up in which you star as a heroic one-man army. Starting in the great outdoors armed with little more than a high-power laser rifle, the bare-chested wonder soldier leaps from ledge to ledge blasting enemy soldiers, occasionally leaping on their heads from above for a bit of variety.

Once through the verdant horizontally scrolling countryside, the hero gains access to an underground complex – a grey maze. Here, the action is viewed from above and behind your on-screen persona. Penetrating the maze is made a little tricky by electrified fences which have been constructed to guard the corridor junctions. Rapid blasting of the control panels at the 'back' of the screen is called for – but to make life a bit more difficult, guards are teleported into the trouble spot and have to be taken out too. Every so often automatic defence systems are encountered, and rolling mines trundle towards you.

Fight through the complex and eventually you come out on the other side – it's back in the open with more enemy soldiers to send packing.

Adequate fodder for shoot 'em up fans, *Gryzor* requires you to blast everything in sight without respite or responsibility.

The Castle in DARKMIST

Taito have entered the shoot 'em up market with a game full of mystery and magic. It combines elements of the vertically scrolling *Commando*, with the multi-directional scrolling of a *Gauntlet*-style combat adventure. *Darkmist* features a Samurai-like central character on a quest to collect treasure and magic tokens, fighting through seven action-packed levels.

Out in the open countryside marauding minions have to be dealt with, including cloaked figures and strange mud monsters that appear from the very ground itself – chop a mud monster with your sword and it turns into a couple of mini mud monsters that both have to be killed before the threat is diminished. The filthy creatures occasionally fling mud at the Samurai, forming more mini mud monsters in the process – and remember: if enough mud is thrown, some of it will stick.

Dungeons, in the form of castles and towns, are encountered at the

THE CASTLE IN DARKMIST



end of the vertically scrolling sections. They offer an opportunity to recharge energy, as well as offering more treasure for the money-hungry hero to collect. Further unpleasant beings have to be disposed of, including pugilistic skeletons and magical swords that whirl in mid-air with no visible means of support. Single-direction doorways link the chambers in the maze sections, and teleporter pads zip you from location to location – life can get a bit confusing once you're inside a building.

Overall, the *Darkmist* machine didn't keep the team captivated for very long – it's a little too derivative, and the action's a bit slow. Although the game is an adequate development of the *Commando* theme, it doesn't quite come off.



With sword in hand, the valiant Samurai hero plods towards a magic portal at the top of the screen

720°

Skate City is the setting for this latest **Atari** arcade offering – and as the name might suggest to skateboard freaks, it's a game that tests your skills at riding a board.

The city streets are full of mean hazards, including bone-crushing vehicles, cyclists, pedestrians, Frisbee throwers and pools of water. To compensate for this, most of the surfaces are ideal for a bit of skateboarding, and points are collected for executing manoeuvres that take advantage of the city scenery.

Each of the game's twenty levels contains four skateboard parks, in which special ramps have been constructed for the amusement of skateboard riders. To enter a park, you need a ticket, and to buy a ticket you must amass enough points by performing tricks in the street. Every so often the ominous message 'Skate or Die' flashes onto the screen – if you can't get into a skateboard park pretty sharpish, death comes in the form of an amorphous cloud that pursues you relentlessly.

Once entry has been gained to a park, tricks and stunts can be performed on the ramps – which is where the real skateboarding skill comes into play. Medals are awarded – Gold, Silver and Bronze – and more importantly, cash prizes are offered. Not real money, of course – just dollars to add to your scoremeter.

Oh, and 720° is the name given to a particularly tricky manoeuvre performed on a board – a leap into the air precedes a spin through 720° before solid ground is touched again.

Certainly worth playing for the experience! An easy game to get addicted to as the skateboard is a delight to control and the action is tricky but very rewarding.

The skateboard freak finds the park is closed. Reflections from the pretty lights that festooned the Winter Gardens appear on the screen . .



ROCK 'N' RAGE



In the Middle Ages, where men were men and the insects deadly. Whenever you find a giant blue beefburger in the game, walk into it and a mirage of the kidnapped vocalist appears – you might be able to see her fading away to the right of the singer. What she calls out is best left to you to hear for yourself . . .

The most innovative game scenario at the exhibition was to be found on the **Konami** stand. A one or two player *Gauntlet* variant, *Rock 'n' Rage*, blasted out music and tempted visitors to the show to embark on a quest to rescue a female vocalist . . .

There you were, playing away in a band in front of an appreciative audience when suddenly this huge hand appeared from the sky and snatched the singer off stage. What option did you have but to follow and get her back?

After a brief journey through the space/time continuum you find yourself transported to Ancient Egypt and doing battle with rampant mummies generated by Sphynx dotted around the landscape. Grenade-hurling locals populate the sandy desert and just to add variety, 'Creatures From The Black Lagoon' hurl killer fish at you from the deep. Giant boulders have a habit of hopping around at random, driven by a mysterious force.

The guitarist can use his 'axe' (of the six-stringed variety) to club the baddies, while the lead singer, should he join the game, fights with a mike-stand. But there's more – musical notes, along with cans of Coke, hamburgers and other musical paraphenalia are scattered around the scenes or appear when a mutant mummy is killed. Food and other goodies recharge energy or earn points, but collecting a note gets you with the beat. With the beat? As long as you have a note in your possession you can fire music at the attacking minions – little notes emanate from your body, expanding as they travel across the screen and rendering instant death to any sentient creature they hit. There's fodder for the moral majority!

There are four historic levels to the game: Ancient Egypt, the Middle Ages, France, and Rome. The final sequence takes place in modern-day USA, and if you can cope with the muggers the band is reunited when the girlie is rescued and you can get back on stage to wow the audience.

After romping through a landscape that forms the start of each level, you enter a building where an evil creature lurks, blocking the portal to the next level. This being has to be destroyed with multiple hits before progress can be made, and fights back rather more powerfully than the minions encountered earlier.

Rock 'n' Rage is played to a suitably loud rock music accompaniment that changes as to progress into the game. It follows on very neatly from the *Gauntlet* theme – well worth a handful of coins, if only to experience the bizarre scenario!

OTHER SCREENS SEEN . . .

BUBBLE BOBBLE

Taito's *Bubble Bobble* is a multi-screen platform game that features a cute little dragon creature.

Controlling the dragon that can leap around from platform to platform and blow giant bubbles, the aim is to clear the successive screens of rampaging dwarves. Blowing a bubble at a dwarf encapsulates it, and the bubble containing your foe floats towards the top of the screen. Head-butt the bubble and it burst, magically converting its contents into a piece of fruit! Eat the fruit for bonus points before moving on to blow bubbles at the next mutant minion.

Other bubbles drift around the screen and they contain fire, thunder or water – burst them to release their contents and watch those little dwarves squirm . . . Each screen is played against a time limit, and bursting one of the pink pods that drift into the playzone speeds up the pace.

"Forever blowing bubbles . . . " A deceptively simple game that proves very addictive and lots of fun to play. A high cuteness factor combined with a neat and bouncy tune that would fit with a children's TV show makes *Bubble Bobble* very compelling. Invest a few coins as soon as you can . . .

LOCK-ON

Tatsumi offer you the chance to pilot an advanced fighter jet in *Lock-On*, doing battle with enemy aircraft and blasting ground installations. The centre of the screen features a grid sight used to target your air-to-air missiles – once they're locked on (indicated by yellow squares appearing) it's time to loose off the missiles and concentrate on blasting anything you can spot on the ground with laser cannon.



Enemy tanks shoot deadly fireballs into the air – and although the plane's advanced defence system offers a brief warning of impending danger, the ground-to-air missiles are very tricky to avoid.

A well-polished shoot 'em up that features excellent graphics but misses out on the game-play stakes. Weak, overall.





DARIUS

Another variation on the shoot 'em up theme comes from **Taito** in the form of *Darius* which is set in an underwater scenario and can be played by one or two players seated in a wide cockpit – to add realism, the seats vibrate! While the scenario and game-play of *Darius* is hardly innovative – once again you have to fight your way along a horizontally scrolling landscape dealing death to hordes of baddies, collecting items to boost firepower, strengthen shields and so on – the cunning aspect of the game is the way in which **Taito** have arranged three monitors side by side. The landscape scrolls smoothly along the bank of screens, and you can hardly see the joins!

Nothing amazingly innovative here, apart from the vibro-seat! Three-screen driving games have appeared before, but this is the first time a shoot 'em up has been given the triple-screen treatment. Good for a couple of plays to see how neatly the backdrops scroll from screen to screen, but likely to become uninspiring fairly quickly.

VICTORY ROAD

The follow-up to *Ikari Warriors* from **SNK** made an appearance, featuring the same joystick-cum-paddle controller. The game itself could best be described as *Ikari Warriors In Space* in which Thunder and Earthquakes can be harnessed to phase the enemy.

Great, if you liked *Ikari Warriors*, boring if you didn't – little more than a change of graphics supported by a change of scenario and scenery.

FIRETRAP

Soon to be arriving on home micros courtesy of **Electric Dreams**, this vertically scrolling rescue game has you scaling the outside walls of a burning skyscraper. Girls, doggies and businessmen hang out of the windows and have to be rescued – reach them and they parachute to safety while you continue your upward climb by waggling the joystick up and down to manipulate the suckers attached to your hands and feet. Tongues of fire lick out from windows, periodically hurling fireballs towards the ground. Sundry items of furniture fall from above as the panicked occupants of the building try to remove inflammable material from their offices and flats – get hit by a fireball or falling furniture and you're knocked off the wall and tumble to the ground.

Like any competent firefighter, you start the mission with a water gun which disposes of flames. Some of the burning windows reveal extra firefighting equipment when the flames are extinguished, and collecting this equipment allows the water cannon to be upgraded to the point where it shoots water in four directions.

A map records you progress towards the top of the building, and once it has been scaled and the girl who has taken refuge on the roof rescued, you can parachute down to a hero's welcome on the ground before setting off to put out yet another blazing inferno.

Not really State Of The Art as far as game-play goes – somehow it all looks and feels rather dated. A simple game that offers a moderate challenge.

DANGER ZONE

Budding anti-aircraft gunners in Blackpool weren't be able to resist the challenge offered by **Cinematronics** in *Danger Zone*. Gripping a double set of joysticks on the front of a swivelling, pivoting monitor mounted at head height, the aim of the game is to defend a ground installation from wave upon wave of enemy aircraft intent on damaging your base.

A radar scanner at the bottom of the screen warns of approaching squadrons and gripping the joysticks with the firebuttons firmly depressed you have to blast away at anything that moves in the sky. Formation of jet fighters materialise and if the planes aren't shot down in double-quick time they peel off from the formation and fly solo, leaving you to dodge and weave, moving the whole monitor assembly around as you attempt to shoot down the stragglers.

As each wave of attackers is destroyed, bonus points are awarded and then points are subtracted for the amount of damage they managed to inflict on the base you defend. Eventually the time comes when too much damage has been sustained and a nuclear explosion ends the game . . .

Fast and furious action, and a free physical work-out with every game as your biceps bulge with shifting the monitor around. Very little game here, however.





VIDEO FOOTBALL

And finally, football fans aren't going to be left out of the action in arcades this year. **Bally Sente**'s American footie game is set in the street where hazards rarely encountered on a regular pitch have to be dealt with, including cars, dogs, open manhole covers and the odd paperboy. *Street Football* is a game for one or two players and is controlled with trackerballs which move members of the three-man teams around the street while a firebutton controls catches and throws.

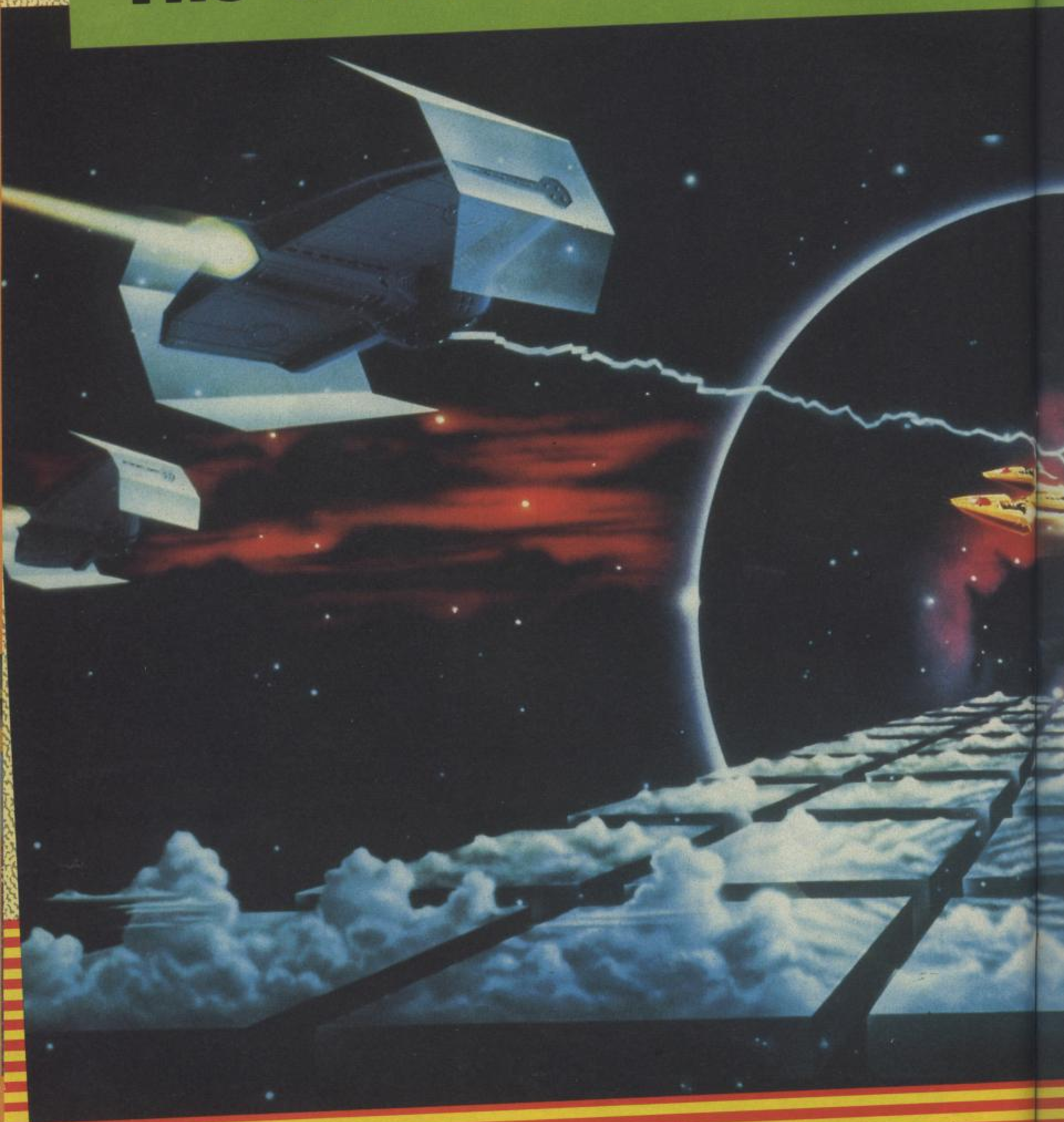
Soccer purists who prefer to manipulate a spherical ball with their feet and heads should get plenty of fun from **Taito**'s *Kick and Run*. Up to four players can compete against the computer or against each other, playing in teams of two. The game is played with joystick, firebutton and foot pedal – for that adding realism when shooting or fouling.

Fun games both.



Star Raid

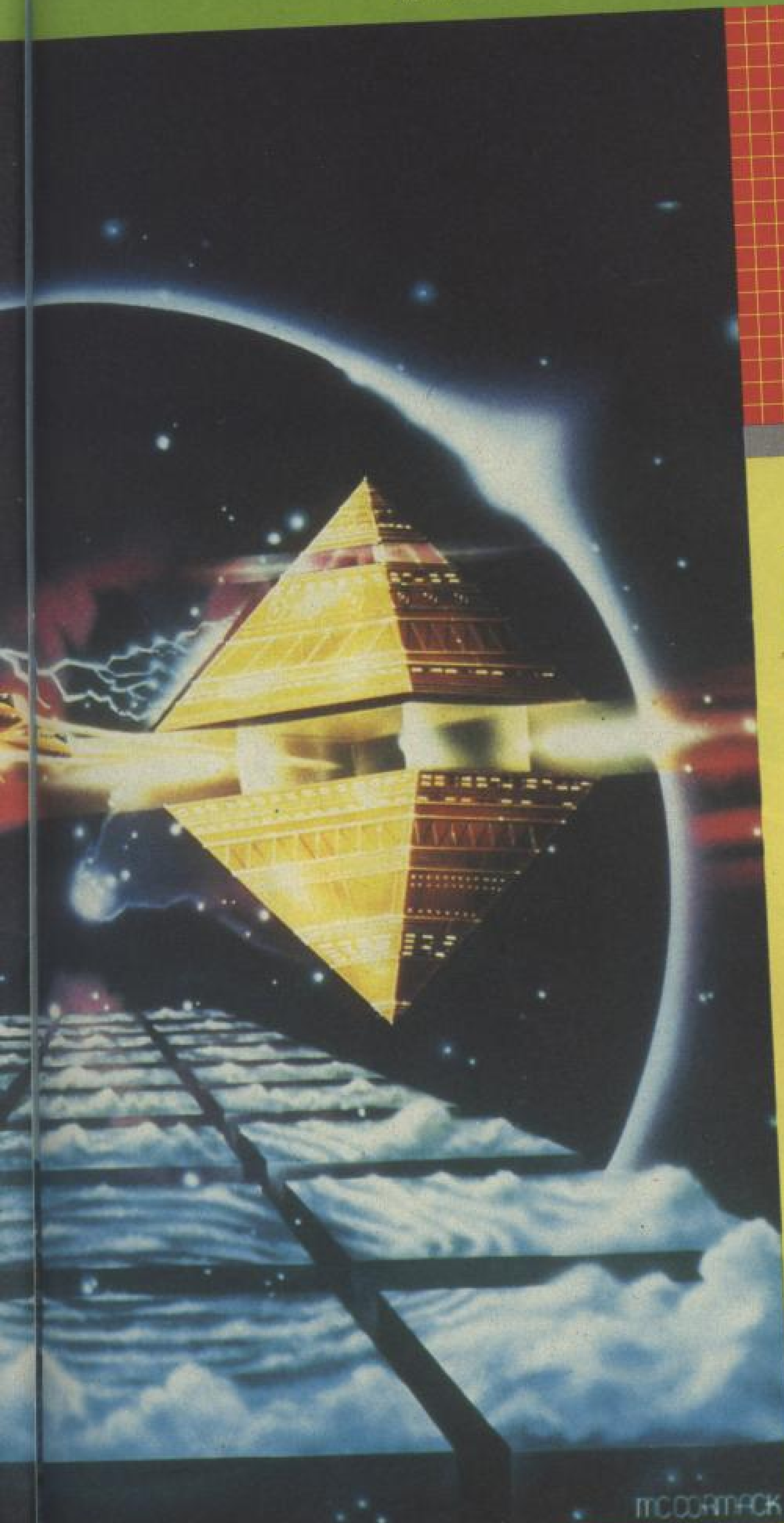
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LLOYD MANGRAM'S FORUM

There I was, just thinking spring had arrived (well, almost) and it damned well goes and snows again – and that for an issue marked 'April'. Ludicrous business, this magazine thing – I know full well my calendar tells me (as I write) that it's really only just started being March. Perhaps that accounts for the snow.

But for April's FORUM I've received some very varied letters indeed. It's infrequently that there's a clear-cut winner for Letter Of The Month status, but the one I chose I liked a great deal. What's more, I have to tell you, its writer is getting a pay rise, because as from this issue, the Powers That Be have generously, graciously and philanthropically allowed me to up the prize from £20 to **£30 worth of software**! (It's the equivalent of two subscriptions to CRASH, or, looked at another way, about the same as my weekly take home pay.

Anyway, on to this month's best letter . . .

APOCALYPSE SEGA

Lloyd,
According to all the news and reports that I've read lately, the Day of the Game Console is fast approaching. Their arrival now seem inevitable, so I thought I would voice my opinion as to what is likely to happen.

At first sight, dedicated games consoles seem to have much to offer the player; the graphics and sound effects will far surpass those achievable on our home computers, which were never really designed as games machines. But is this in itself enough? To answer this I think we must go back to the age-old problem of what makes a game a good one.

In any game, there are two major factors; there's the concept behind the game, and then there's the presentation (which includes graphics, sound, packaging and licence titles). If both these ingredients are right, then you should have a playable and addictive game which grabs the eye and sells well – the type we all like to see. If the concept is good but the presentation is not up to standard then the game may still be enjoyable to play and worthy of success, but will probably be a commercial failure. The worst type of game has neat presentation masking a poor concept – licensed games often (not always) fall into this category. These games can often be fun for several hours before the unplayability comes through, and even the CRASH reviewers have, on occasion, give a Smash to a game which is no more than a good implementation of a bad idea.

Now if I can return from my tangent; I think that if consoles become popular then all we'll see will be old ideas in new clothes. What the majority of the games-playing public want is a game that's fun to play as well as to look at – and that means coming up with fresh ideas and original concepts. And we know who produce those – small companies with ambition and imagination who know their games must be good if they are to survive – not great corporations who can safely churn out superbly presented, but ultimately uninteresting products (and the infamous licensed games rear their ugly heads again here), because they know that the name and the ads and the screen shots will sell the game without having to bother about trivia such as how much fun the game is to play.

Programming teams and a few brave companies are keeping the Spectrum software market vaguely innovative. But if the consoles take over all we can hope to see is a never-ending line of run-of-the-mill products which quickly lose their appeal. Will we see ideas which are new and original as *Lords of Midnight*, *Shadowfire*, *Pyjamarama*, *Knight Lore* and *Fat Worm Blows A Sparky*? Even today I played a completely fresh and original game, *Feud*. The consoles would, for the most part I fear, spell the end of innovation.

But console manufacturers know they can be commercially successful since the games-playing public will have no choice. Well I would advise them to think again because if we have to pay £20 for a game with a life of only a few days, and which cannot be pirated and swapped (a fact which encourages people to buy since they know that they can obtain more for their money this way), then we may decide not to buy games at all. And that would be a sad end to the most lively entertainment industry of our day.

The future of software lies not with dedicated consoles, but with machines such as the Amiga and Atari ST, which have memory, sound and graphics but are still easily programmable and leave room for innovation. But until their prices fall to a more acceptable level, I'll stick with my Spectrum, and continue to play games which are interesting , original, and fun to play.

PS I've just read details of the first Sega cartridges. They are three shoot 'em ups, two racing games and a helicopter-rescue. I rest my case . . .

A Bailey, Carshalton, Surrey

Thank you for a most interesting letter Mr Bailey. I tend to take a more optimistic view of technological advance (garnished with what I fondly hope is healthy cynicism). I know it has to be seen in context with his political thinking, but in 1948 George Orwell saw terrible things happening to society because of television. Terrible things have happened of course, like East Enders, but the horrors he foresaw hadn't come to pass by 1984. I can see games consoles being marvellous devices for creative home entertainment – one day. But then they will be interactive, worked by computers, incorporating digitised video, sound recording, perhaps even the new DAT sound systems, NOT dedicated machines. After all, we've been through games machines already. They had their day, and were superseded by home micros which offered far more value and fun.

The new generation of games consoles obviously offer more than their predecessors in the way of graphic and aural quality, but, as you point out so rightly, they're not likely to offer better concepts or games designs. We'll see.

In the meantime I think I agree with you. Stick to your Spectrum. And for your letter I most graciously award you the first ever £30 worth of software.
LM

IN DIRE DREDD

Dear Lloyd,
After reading the March Issue of CRASH I felt I had to put pen to paper, and discuss some of the things that come to mind after reading it.

Mel Croucher' *Tamara Knight* is certainly not 'incredibly convoluted' and complex. Instead I feel that the article is (to put it into Mr Croucher's own words) derogatory to the rest of the magazine. The plot is non-existent and the humour is pathetic. Come on Lloyd! Admit it – you made up Stephen Graham's letter just for the hell of it! Or perhaps there really is someone out there who could be such a creep I doubt it!

MELBOURNE HOUSE's *Judge Dredd*. How DARE they produce such a NAFF 'game' out of one of the greatest characters ever invented in comic history! I shall certainly think twice before buying another Melbourne House game, and I feel that they've certainly tarnished their previously good name. Be warned, Melbourne House, for you are on the 'Angel' Gang's death list!

Reviewers' names and revised rating system, Brilliant! Well done CRASH ! At last we have a foolproof (?) guide to buying software. It is this kind of thing which puts CRASH a cut above the other computer mags. Well done!

Judge Mortis, Towcester, Northants

I certainly DID NOT make up Stephen Graham's letter. As to whether that makes him a creep or not, I couldn't tell you – perhaps he could . . .

Trying it out on the Ludlow Mafia (Junior Operatives Branch), the concensus seems to be split pretty much down the middle on Tamara Knight. And something that appeals to 50 percent can't be all bad . . .

Can it?
LM

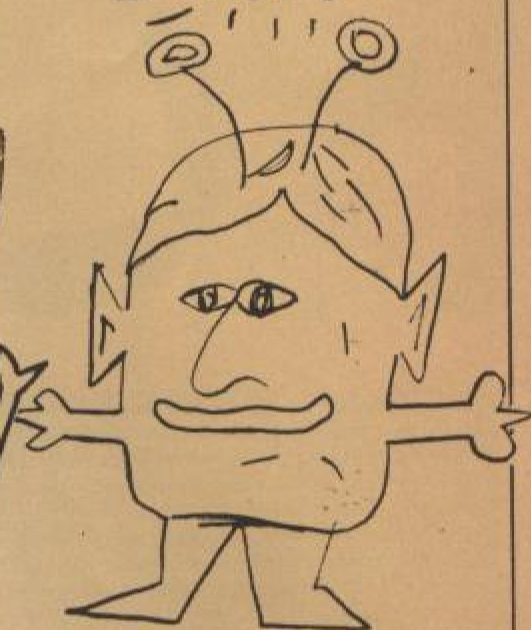


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CHEAP LAMB

Dear Lloyd,
After purchasing the March edition of CRASH I felt I had to write in praise of budget software. Jeremy Connor's letter states that all budget games are 'mutton dressed up as lamb', and he also says that only games which have formerly been released at full price contain the slightest hint of playability and addictiveness.

In my opinion he should think about what he's preaching. Most budget software houses have 'wised up' enough, to realise that if they place any old rubbish on the market, they'll hardly experience a booming trade. And so they've improved the quality of their games accordingly.

I have only to glance through CRASH to prove my point. Look at: *Feud* (£1.99) 91 percent, *Lap Of The Gods* (£1.99) 80 percent, *Universal Hero* (£1.99) 83 percent, *Olli And Lissa* (£1.99) 78 percent, *Thrust* (£1.99) 76 percent.

Now, no-one I think can still say in truth that budget software is garbage. Admittedly these are select cases, but looking through some of the full price games in the March Issue, these have doubled their ratings.

Software houses should become aware of the surge of budget games today which will soon consume the majority of the software market.
Peter Walker, Scunthorpe, S Humberside

I wouldn't argue about the quality of some budget software, although the record shows that it has its poor quality games, just as much as the full-priced end of the market. However, it's also worth considering the position of Mastertronic who, in taking over one or two other software houses over the past two years, has always left those entities free to continue developing more expensive games. The truth remains – it's nearly impossible to develop a really complex, exciting and original game unless the full price is returned upon it.
LM

APPRECIATE THE ONE-TWO-EIGHT

Dear CRASH,
I've owned a 48K Spectrum for about a year and have recently bought a 128+2. Like most 128 owners I'm disappointed in the lack of software that uses the 128 to its full potential. No doubt software houses have 128 games in the pipeline, but they're a long time coming!

One idea I've had is for that for the time being (as a stop-gap) maybe software houses could release previous games in enhanced versions. I mean, they don't hesitate in re-releasing games in the form of compilations, so I could see they would benefit from 128 owners who already have the 48K version but would appreciate an enhanced 128K version.

Just imagine *Highway Encounter, Zoids, Quazatron* etc) with extra levels, problems, improved sound and sold at a budget price say £2.99 to £3.00. 128 owners get the benefit and it's another way for software houses to get the last bit of profit out of an old game – so everyone's happy.

Look at the 48K version of *Starglider* and the 128K. I know which I prefer.
Ian Charlesworth, Caldicot, Newport, Gwent

Yes, but you're overlooking a slight problem, Ian, when you compare re-releasing games in enhanced form and as compilations. With a compilation, the originating software house doesn't have to do anything, except hand over a master to the compiling licensee – no cost, nothing; just a small royalty to come back when it sells. But before re-releasing a 128 enhanced version of an older game, someone's got to do quite a bit of programming work first, and that costs money. Actually, I don't know how much it would cost (probably depends a lot on the game and its coding) for software houses to put your idea into operation, but I rather doubt it would be possible at a budget price. Can someone tell me, please?
LM

IMPOSSIBLE MISSION

Dear Lloyd,
Prepare yourself for a Speccy-tale of the 128K variety.

Deep in the dark realms of the past, I think it was March 86, a man came to a news conference and hailed the coming of a new Messiah, the man was the late great Sir Clive Sinclair and the Messiah was the Spectrum 128K MK1. At the price of £179.00 it was a bit steep, but I managed to save up and buy it.

But software was the problem, and as I owned both *Elite* and *Tomahawk* I got off to a bad start. Then behold, a Saviour came to the rescue in the shape of a weekly magazine, *PCW*, which in an interview with a spokesman for FIREBIRD told all owners of the non-compatible *Elite* to return it to them for a 128K version.

So I wrapped up my *Elite* carefully, with all its manuals, and placed it in a secure package and sent it through the post by Recorded Delivery (Regn 229952 on 18 March 1986). Now having been an avid reader of CRASH since Issue One, I didn't expect anything to happen for at least six to ten weeks – and I wasn't surprised. But as the fourth and the fifth months passed I got worried, and so sent a letter off to Firebird asking them what had happened.

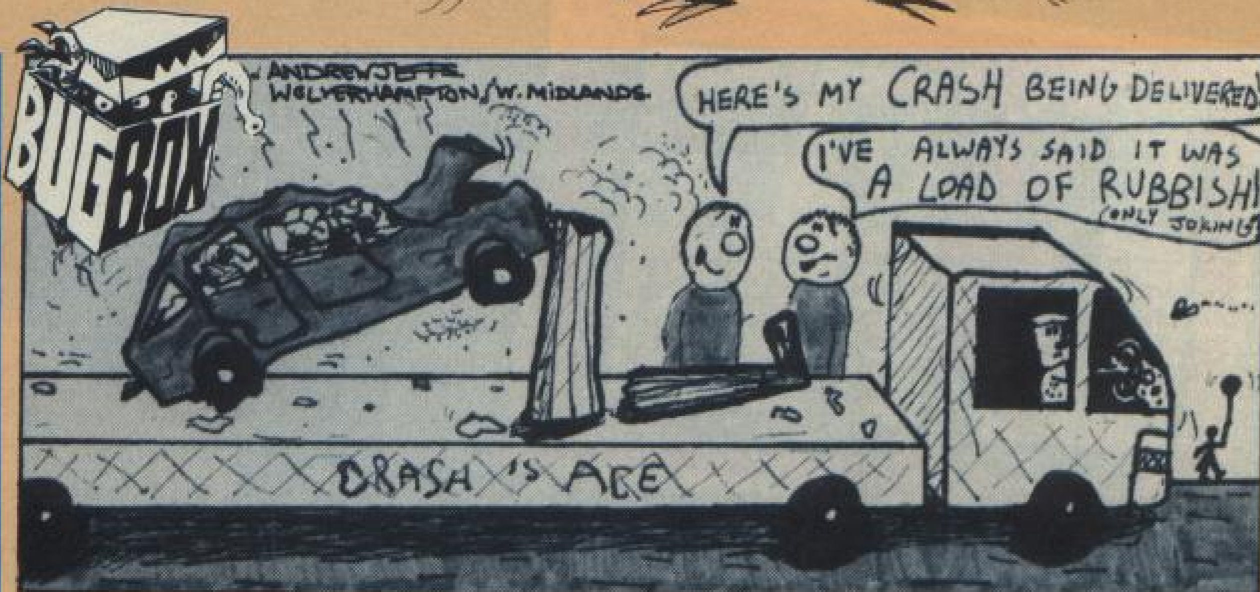
I got no reply, but decided to wait. By now *Your Sinclair* and *Sinclair User* were printing articles about the 128K *Elite*; while *YS* told us of a super *Elite* 128K, *SU* told us of a straight conversion with added sound effects; but meanwhile you at CRASH kept silent.

After eight months I wrote again, and still no answer, even though both letters contained an SAE. So as the first anniversary approaches, I decided to write to you to tell of my plight and to ask other CRASH readers whether they ever received an upgraded version of *Elite* from Firebird.

Although 128K software is now more available, I have just bought *Starglider* and it's brilliant. I think it's a shame the first 128K compilation tape by OCEAN contains two games that were originally given away free with the 128K Mk1. But never mind that grumble.

I would just like to say thank you for over three years of reviewing Spectrum software.
David Clarkson, Castleford, W Yorks

A heart-rending story, David, and a slightly surprising one too. Has anyone else failed to receive their upgraded version of Elite *from Firebird? Perhaps someone there would like to check out the recorded delivery number for David?*
LM



DISENGOODWINED

Dear Lloyd,
I've been reading CRASH for a year now, and have no complaints. Is this possible, you ask yourself?!

Well, not entirely. I own a 128 and think it is a good computer despite a few problems. One of these is the RS232 port, which I use for my printer. Now back in Issue 33 (August 86) we were told in the Plus 2 Laid bare section of News, that, quote; 'Printer control codes are ignored unless you use a couple of POKEs – details in next month's TECH TIPS'; unquote. I own a printer and so waited eagerly for the POKES, which failed to appear. Is Simon Goodwin suffering from amnesia? If so, can you jog his memory, please?

Onto another subject. Where, oh where, has the arty feature ON THE SCREEN disappeared to? It was run for three issues, missed for another and then came back for the last time, never to be seen again. Has RAINBIRD pulled out, or have you just chucked it out to make more space?

I thought I would just stick my oar into the POKEs debate to say that POKEs are great.

Yours bashSimonGoodwinly (!)
Mark Otway, Shepperton, Middlesex

Okay, I'll give Simon a bash for you, and see if I can't shake out a POKE or two from those voluminous pockets. As to ON THE SCREEN*, I think I'm allowed to say that one or two minor problems we've experienced over the last couple of issues (nothing to do with* RAINBIRD *however) have made it difficult to run. Can't say any more than that, except that Roger Kean says he will be looking into it.*
LM

IN SEARCH OF PERFECTION

Dear Lloyd,
What is a good Software House? What a strange question, I hear you cry. But actually, it isn't. Surely to all purposes a good software house is one that you can rely on to turn out good games each time. And if you think about it, there isn't one!

The only software house that has ever been 'solid as a rock' in this respect is ULTIMATE. However there is no excuse for *Pentagram* – a boring and unplayable game (ever tried playing it with a joystick?) and this, along with *Nightshade*, is where the company falls down.

Other software houses have released some amazing games only to put out others of exceptionally poor quality. Look, for example, at OCEAN – what it added to its reputation with the release of *Cobra* and *The Great Escape* it lost with *Mailstrom, Knight Rider* and *It's A Knockout*. And even ELITE and GREMLIN aren't perfect, Gremlin's *Footballer Of The Year* and *Future Knight* left a lot to be desired, and Elite lovers need only take one look at *Space Harrier* and *Ghosts 'n' Goblins* – two examples of great arcade games mauled in conversion to the Speccy.

The race to be top dog is on, now that Ultimate has stepped down from the throne. And I believe that HEWSONS will soon climb to number one – the only blemish so far being *City Sucker*. Steve Crow's *Starquake* is still the best Speccy game ever released, and with him in their stable, Hewsons can't go far wrong!
J M Macdonald, Gnosall, Staffs

It would be very surprising to me if one software house actually managed to be at the top by only releasing excellent games. With the best will in the world there are going to be failures – or at the very least, games which do not appeal to everyone, and are therefore perceived as being failures by those people.* ULTIMATE *certainly has enjoyed an enviable reputation for Spectrum games for a long while (not so bright on the Commodore however). And I'm sure most other companies strive to achieve the same ambitious reputation with everything they do.
LM



BELATEDLY DOWN UNDER

Dear Lloyd,
I apologise if this letter seems a bit out of date but having just received the December 86 edition (in February 87) it's a bit hard to keep up. This also means that the competitions, which you seem to be so proud of, have run out by about a month. So how about having a competition with extended entry dates every now and then for us CRASH readers Down Under, who can't afford approximately £4.00 per issue to have CRASH sent airmail.

On the 'Chicken and Egg' angle; ideally the computer and the software should come out together, which means that a portion of the responsibility for software should lie with the company that develops the hardware. After all, it can only help their sales if there's a supply of software to keep the public happy until the independents move into fill the vacant software slot.

Now a bit about your great (this is not a grovel, it's solid fact) magazine. Are you no longer proud of Oli's BRILLIANT covers? If you are, then why has his stylish signature disappeared from the bottom left of the past few covers? And while raving on about artists, how about a follow up to **ON THE COVER** and an article on John Richardson, author of the hilarious **JET-MAN**?

A while ago you said, in reply to some letters, that reviewers' initials should be put after their comments. So why haven't we seen any action on this simple move to improve?

BUG-BOX is fine in moderation. Three or four per issue are great but when it gets so that **BUG-BOX** has more space than the letters then the situation is a bit ridiculous.

A one line gripe – what has the PBM section got to do with Spectrum gaming?

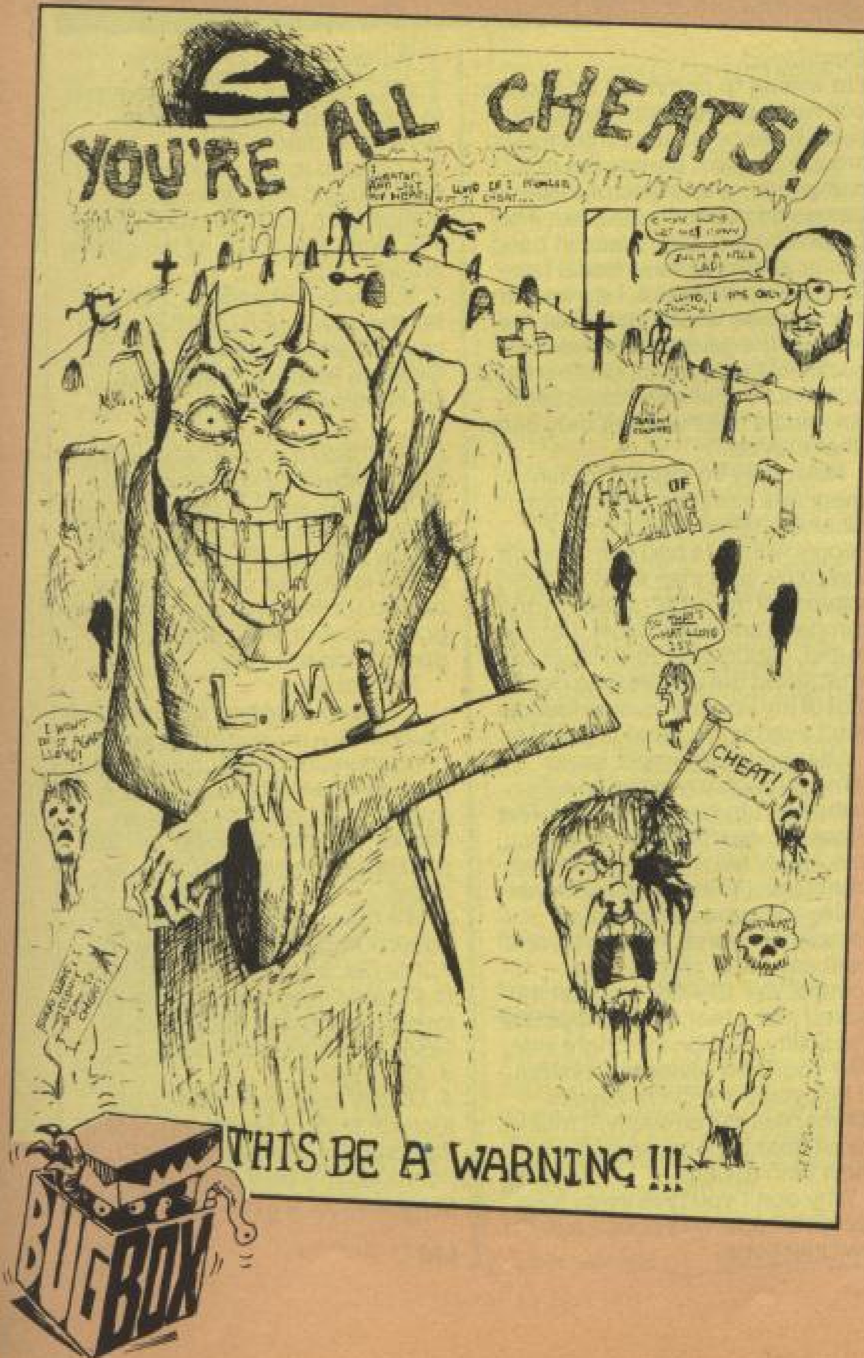
Back in Issue 27 there was an interview with Mel Croucher. In it he said that the industry had stagnated because 15-year-old programmers can't be original. Maybe they can't, but there are plenty of other mature-age programmers out there who don't seem to be helping move the industry in the direction that Mr Croucher seems to want it to go in (ie away from mindless destruction games). I'm also sure that his sliced breadline has some cosmic relevancy, but as a mere mortal I find it a bit beyond me.
John Hind, Salisbury Heights, S Australia

I do appreciate the problem for you with the competitions, but it's exceedingly hard to arrange any over an extended period to suit readers in Australia or New Zealand. I don't want you to feel like some sort of second class reader, but there are two problems. First; if we delayed the closing dates, then British readers would have to wait months for results, and if we ran competitions literally for you in Australia, it would only be for a handful of readers (well a few thousand, but not tens of thousands), which as you, in turn, may appreciate, doesn't excite British software houses. Or does it? Any takers?

Some of the covers you mention, were not actually painted by Oli, but by another artist called Ian Craig, which may explain why you've missed his signature. This cover is by Oli, and they will be from now on.

As you'll know by now (gosh, it's like talking to someone living light years away!), we did cover John Richardson a few issues back. And you'll also know that the reviewers' names appear after their comments. As for PBM, not only is it a popular subject with computer owners, but many players do use their computers to aid in making moves. Okay, it isn't Spectrum-specific, but CRASH would quickly become boring if we stuck only to Spectrum-related subjects.

Hope you get to read this before Christmas, John!
LM





A MOANER MOANS ABOUT MOANING

Dear Lloyd,
What's going on in the world today? Well I'll tell you what – people are changing, changing into moaners, people who just winge or complain all the time, people who never seem to stop complaining about the price of this, and what a lot of money that was.

People moan at the price of software, but they must know that piracy is the reason prices are sky high.

People also moan about buying games that are either pathetic, too difficult, or too easy to complete, so why the hell do they buy these games in the first place I ask myself? Anyway, about pathetic games; soon the time will come when software houses who constantly produce pathetic games that are very much over-hyped will vanish and the software market will be a much safer place in which to shop.

Another favourite moan is, 'I can't do this game, it's much too difficult'. Well, being as there's over five million Spectrum owners with differing game playing abilities, I can't see a solution to this problem.

But it's not just the games players that moan, it's also the software houses; they're going on about a slump in sales but this is nothing new as it is effecting the record industry as well.

Finally the biggest moaners of the lot seem to be the parents. It's always, 'turn that bloody thing off, it's warping your mind' or, 'I hope you're going to pay half of the electric bill the amount you've used playing on that computer'.

So it seems all people do is moan, oh well, I suppose that's life.
Matthew Haynes, Holbrook, Coventry

From the moment we're out of the womb thrown,
Life appears as one great long moan.
But if all we can do about it is groan,
Then we never do deserve to be shown
The excitements it offers, and our joys will have flown
LM (1987)



BUT I'M NOT MOANING

Dear Lloyd,
Before we start I would just like to point out that this letter is not a moaning one. I am quite satisfied with arcade conversions, girlie tipsters, budget software, hacking (I'm a hacker) pokes, reviews, reviewers, rating systems, Hunter S Minson (burrlieve it or not) and other such trivial matters.

Back in the good old days (not so good, not so old) when the colour scheme on the contents page used to make eyes twist and eyebrows combine, I saw your magazine perched on a shelf in W H Smith (CRASH, I thought at the time, was a WEIRD name for a computer magazine (innocent days). I then looked around and saw all the other computer mags which were on offer.

Being young and foolish (not so young but totally tapped in the head) I decided *not* to spend my (not-so hard-earned) cash on your mag. That decision I regret, and it was one of the biggest mistakes I've ever made (the other two are unmentionable, besides, this is a family magazine).

Now I subscribe to CRASH, and it's great. When I first got your magazine, I rushed out and bought the first CRASH Smash I saw when I breezed through your pages.

'Didn't you read the reviews first?' comes a cry from the depths of CRASH Towers.

'No I didn't' comes the reply. And it's the best policy I've adopted in years. I'd recommend it to anyone. With this policy I've doubled my games, and I've become a respected figure with my mates.

'How?' comes another strangled cry. Well I'll let you into a little secret (ooh!). Every time I see a CRASH Smash I pop down to my local high street and purchase the whopper.

Gobs fly open the next day as my mates (who will remain nameless except for Gaz, Shaz, Daz, Baz and Laz) find that old snideypants here is the first one they know who has the truly maga-brill game they saw in CRASH. They're all at my feet the next moment, saying they'd give their hearts for that game (although some people prefer hearts, I would much rather have games in return). For one original I usually get around ten – dare I say it – pirated copies (shock, horror).

I now have over 60 games including only five originals!!

I save up for a game, and one game only, and that and the 'copies' I get do me very well, thank you.

Yes, thanks CRASH, your Smash trademark has earned me 'tons' of games.
The Kid, Collyhurst, Manchester

This sounds like a very tall tale to me. 'S'far as I know, CRASH has given rather more than five Smashes in its time, if that's all the originals you've bought. And what about all the Smashes that don't make it into the shops for a week or so after an issue has gone on sale? Don't ever kid a kidder, Kid.
LM

THE BIG TIE-IN

Dear Lloyd,
I'm writing to comment on arcade conversions. Recently, Imagine/Ocean have been concentrating on arcade and film tie-ins. I'm not complaining, as some of these games have been good, like *The Great Escape*, but Ocean in particular seems to have had a few bad games behind it. I agree with many letters which state that the name of the game supercedes the quality of the product. One minute Ocean turns out a first class product, next a failure. Don't they care what they sell?

Now, they've started to ruin Imagine's name by turning out rubbish like *Yie Ar Kung Fu 2*. People will buy a bad game from a company, and then automatically assume all the other games by that company are awful. Now, I'm not stupid, I subscribe to CRASH but what about the people who don't? A lot of my Speccy owning friends don't even know what CRASH is.

After your December issue came through my letter box, I rushed out to buy *Cobra* and *The Great Escape*. Both were, as you said, excellent quality products (from Ocean). In your Christmas issue, you gave *Starglider* a Smash. Of course, I bought it, and must say I was slightly disappointed. For £14.95, I reckon it lacked just a teensy weensy bit of playability. Still, on the bright side, I like your new reviewing system. At last you print the reviewers' names next to the review. It makes it a lot easier for us, as now we know who to nag.

Why don't you give away free booklets? (LM was cool) Lastly, a few questions:

1. What the hell is LMLWD?
2. Why don't you put more adverts in black and white and more reviews in colour?
3. I noticed in the February issue that you can only order back issues from no 24 onwards (page 77). Does this mean all the others are sold out?
4. Purely out of interest, can you tell me how much CRASH would cost if it were weekly?

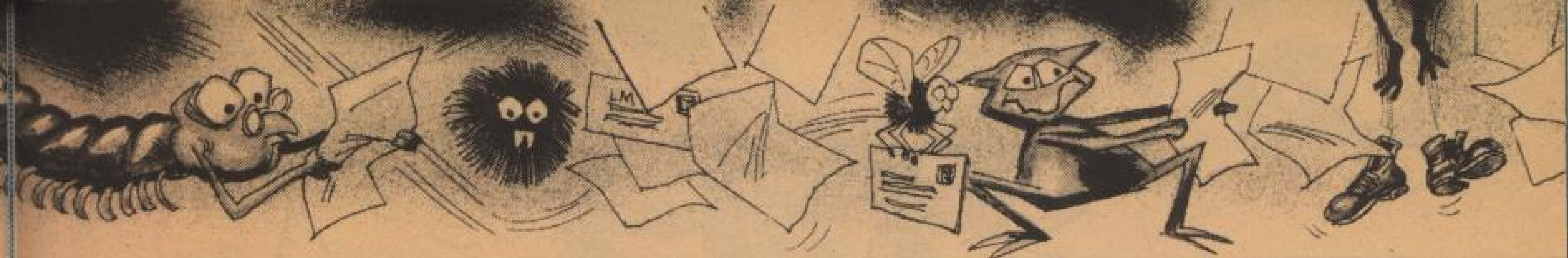
Graeme Mason, Highwood, Chelmsford, Essex

I'm horrified to think that you have Spectrum-owning friends who don't know what CRASH is! Perhaps they'd better go out and buy it, that way, like you, they would know that OCEAN, *like any prolific software house, has lots of good product and some poorer games occasionally.*

The answers:

1. Lloyd Mangram's Long Word Dictionary – an invaluable source of obscure, unpronounceable and hard-to-spell words (sadly, only available bound in Morroccan leather with hand-tooled 24 carat gold detail for around £375 per copy).
2. We have no control over the adverts and whether they're colour or black and white. That's up to the advertisers who pay for their pages so you can afford to buy CRASH at a sensible price.
3. Yes it does.
4. Lord knows! But rather a bit more than 25p. Most fortnightlies, for instance, average about £1.30 per month for only a few pages more than your average CRASH.

LM



A BOLT IS SHOT

Dear Lloyd,
Many moons ago, while watching television I strayed onto BBC1 and *Newsround*. John Craven was doing an article on arcades and addiction to fruit/arcade machines.

I think he mentioned court cases and definitely talked about stealing to pursue this hobby. When CRASH (February Issue) came through the letter box I flicked through the FORUM and to my surprise found a letter from Tom Evans which raised these very points. An entirely original letter? I think not.

Glad to see you take notice of readers' opinions such as, Stephen Click and (surprisingly) S Valente. He suggested shortening (or abolishing) reviews of bog-standard games. You have adopted this with budget games but strangely *Harvey Headbanger* (80 percent) got the same amount of reviewing space as *Pro Golf* (26 percent) and three-quarters of the space of *It's A Knockout* (39 percent).

Last and least my name is David Shotbolt not Shotbott as the Comps Minion thinks. He got it right in the *Strike Force Cobra* competition.

Another point; Andrew Onions of REALTIME SOFTWARE said that *Starstrike II* was lacking in game play yet CRASH gave it 96 percent. Strange.

David Shotbolt, Dunstable, Beds

Well I did ask for readers' opinions on Tom Evans' letter, and there haven't been many. I assume this means most CRASH readers think his sentiments regarding the insidious dangers of arcades are misplaced or irrelevant. Bit odd to accuse him of being unoriginal though. After all, there's just been the case of the 23-year-old who committed suicide because he was hundreds of pounds in debt through gambling on fruit machines. But cases like that are extreme and isolated; not that I'm saying people don't over-spend in the arcades, just that the majority can keep their interest at a reasonable level and not become dangerously addicted.

Tom's letter also suggested out that it was wrong for CRASH to discuss or even mention arcade machines and games, because the average age of our readers is 14 to 15, and it's illegal for anyone under 16 to enter an arcade. I repeat, as I have so many times before, that while many CRASH readers may be aged 14 to 15, the AVERAGE AGE as supplied by the last questionnaire, was over 17 years.

I can't comment on the space different games get, because it's not up to me how much the reviewers think it's worth saying about them; but as to Andrew Onions and his comment – haven't you ever heard the aphorism which says that artists are the worst liars when it comes to their own work . . . ?
LM

NEW POKES FOR OLD

Dear Lloyd,
I think your mag is brilliant, but why can't your Holy Eminence devote a few more pages to your inexperienced games players (me and my mates).

What I am suggesting is that you devote a few pages to pokes for beginners, pokes for old games like *Lunar Jetman*, *Jet Set Willy* etc. I'm sure that many readers would appreciate it.

LEISURE GENIUS ought to be ashamed of themselves: What I'm referring to is the game *Scalextric*. I load it up only to find a game similar to PSION's' *Chequered Flag* with the exception of a track designer!

Congratulations to MIRRORSOFT who've made it to the top of my charts with *Dynamite Dan II*. Here are my charts:- 1 Dynamite Dan II
2 Cauldron II
3 Jet Set Willy II
4 Manic Miner
5 Underwurlde
6 Spellbound
7 Bombjack
8 Sweevo's World
9 Monty on the Run
10 The Great Escape

Paul Harrison, Carlisle, Cumbria

Old pokes, huh? There was a time when the very name Jet Set Willy *could set my teeth on edge. Shortly after the game was released, I was inundated with cheats, tips and pokes. In fact it was the first game (*Manic Miner *was just the tip of the iceberg) to really receive the royal hacking treatment. I got so much stuff relating to it that it was almost a pleasure to hand the tips section (wot I've just got back from Hannah) over to young Candy-snapper.*
LM

NOT OUTDATED!

LM,
I have a series of complaints to make.

While reading another mag called *SU*, I noticed some tips for *The Great Escape*. I just noticed the tipster's name at the bottom. He was called Charlie Morgan; good tips I thought. But when I read Hannah's tips on *TGE*, I noticed who sent them in. By coincidence it just happened to be Charlie. This, in my book, is serious disloyalty towards CRASH. So, advice to you Charlie, take your useless tips and maps and keep them to yourself. I'm sure other readers won't want to use second-hand ripped-off tips!

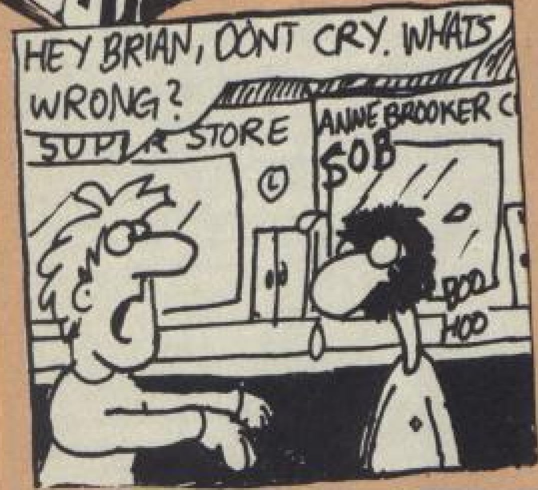
Why does everything – and everybody want to write off AMERICANA and *Ole Toro*. I agree, it's a terrible sport, but so is killing everything in sight, like *Cobra*. If everybody criticised blood-and-guts games the software houses would go bankrupt. What's the big deal?

Why is everybody saying that the Speccy has reached its limits? Just as class games like *Strike Force Harrier* have been made – out comes a mega-fantastic brill game called *The Great Escape*. How did OCEAN do it? It's total rubbish saying the Spectrum is getting out of date. So Ocean keep it up!

David Edge, Madley, Telford, Shropshire

It's a bit naughty of Charlie to send his tips to more than one magazine, I agree David, but if they were his and they were printed by both publications, then he was hardly ripping them off!
LM













FANZINE FACTS

Dear Lloyd,
We are going to start a magazine following the fanzine feature in the March Issue (No 38). However, as we don't exactly have much experience in writing, editing and producing magazines, we would like some advice.

Firstly can we have list of most of the software companies so we can write to them and begin the long and difficult task of convincing them we are genuine?

Secondly should we send the games back after reviewing them, so they don't think we are getting free games? And lastly, Hannah Smith said in the article that a good way to convince software houses that you *are* real, is to send them a copy of your magazine. How are we supposed to send in a copy of a magazine that doesn't exist? Or are we supposed to fill the first issue with loads of boring technical features and stories. Anyway, please can you give us advice on all these points.

Hopeful Editors Of A Magazine, Neil Packham, Lloyd Thomas, Wokingham, Berks

With a name like Lloyd between you, how can you fail? A list of all the software houses and their addresses would eat up too much space here. I'll see what we can do about that next month, but in the meantime, surely a little ingenuity is what you want. If you're about to embark on a fanzine, then surely you must have access to a fair number of existing games already? Yes, then check the inlays out for company addresses – most put them on.

You must overcome the third problem – convincing companies you're genuine – before worrying about the second. If they believe you, they're unlikely to want you to return the review copies. But you must appreciate their point – Hannah was right, they are concerned about giving freebies to anyone who simply writes in and says, 'we're a fanzine'. All magazines before they launch have to go through the same stage – believe me LM *had to – of producing what's called a 'dummy issue' to make people see it's real. Use those older games of yours to produce a few pages as a trial. Not only will it help you to sort out some of the writing, editing and design problems, but it will also provide you with something to send along to software houses, and help convince them that you are genuine.*

And the best of luck to your venture. Don't forget to send some copies to CRASH for the FANZINE FILE*, I'll be waiting.*
LM

RATED FOR EFFICIENCY

Dear Mr Mangram,
I recently wrote letters to different Software Houses requesting general information on their products, to see just how good they would be in replying.

I thought I'd write and tell you that:
ELITE replies after ten days, six posters and up to date price list.
GREMLIN GRAPHICS replies after 11 days, three posters and up to date price list.
DOMARK replies 11 days, very old price list.
FIREBIRD replies 11 days, fact sheet, price list.
HEWSONS reply seven days, two posters and fact sheet.
QUICKSILVA/ARGUS PRESS replies six days, seven posters, fact sheet and price sheets and two Bug Byte cardboard cut-outs.
OCEAN nothing as yet.
US GOLD nothing as yet.
GARGOYLE/FTL replies 13 days, three posters and price list.
THE EDGE nothing as yet.

Here are my ratings on each company out of five.

Elite	• • • •
Ocean	–
US Gold	–
The Edge	–
Gargoyle	• • • •
Quicksilva	• • • • •
Gremlin	• • • •
Domark	• •
Firebird	• • •
Hewsons	• • • •

So there you have it – Argus Press Software/Quicksilva come out on top.

Shame Ocean/US Gold etc couldn't be bothered to reply, but that's the world we live in.

Julian P Whiting, Taverham, Norwich

I think that's a pretty interesting piece of research Julian. Perhaps you would like to come and work on collating the results of the next (and imminent) CRASHTIONNAIRE! Congratulations to APS and Quicksilva, and everyone else who graciously took part in the research . . .
LM

Okay Spectrum computer freaks everywhere, this is your Main Man-gram, the wizard of the epistles, the spinner of webs and the weaver of words, signing off for another month (working with all those hip-trendies on LM is beginning to get to me). I'm here to open your letters, file them, read them, enter them into my Hermes, edit them, shuffle them round the keys and answer them: and I live inside LLOYD MANGRAM'S FORUM, CRASH, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB. See you in May (when it'll really still be April and probably still snowing).



SINCLAIR'S Z88

Sir Clive Sinclair has launched a £230 portable computer, the Z88. Contrary to rumours, it won't run Spectrum software, but it is an interesting beast, nonetheless. The machine comes from a new company, CAMBRIDGE COMPUTER, but it's the product of almost a decade of development work.

Tech Tipster Simon Goodwin has had a brief 'play' with a prototype Z88, and reports his findings. He also analyses Sinclair's ability to 'bounce back' from apparent disaster, as chronicled in The Sinclair Story in earlier issues of CRASH†. This is not the first time Sir Clive has shed his staff, and his name, to make a fresh start in the gadget business . . .

GENESIS

Uncle Clive has been plugging the idea of a portable machine since he first began making computers – in fact, his first computer concept, the *NewBrain*, was a portable machine. That was originally developed in 1978 by his old firm, **SINCLAIR RADIONICS**. Later it was sold off to **NEWBURY LABORATORIES**, who launched it to an indifferent world in 1982.

As **RADIONICS** collapsed at the end of the seventies, Clive Sinclair set up a new firm, **SCIENCE OF CAMBRIDGE**, with Chris Curry, a star employee from his previous firm. When **RADIONICS** finally bit the dust, **SCIENCE OF CAMBRIDGE** was renamed twice – first to **SINCLAIR COMPUTERS** and then to **SINCLAIR RESEARCH**. No-one was the slightest bit surprised at this, as **SCIENCE OF CAMBRIDGE** advertisements looked exactly like their earlier **RADIONICS** counterparts. The Sinclair link had been obvious all along.

RECURRENT THEMES

Clive has now sold his surname to **AMSTRAD**, but that doesn't stop him putting CLIVE SINCLAIR (without the 'Sir') in large type at the top of the first page of the *Z88* brochure. The leaflet follows the usual Sinclair format, just as the new company name follows on from previous titles.

CAMBRIDGE COMPUTER seems to be run on something of a shoestring. The *Z88* was first revealed at a lunch for journalists at Sir Clive's house in London. Two days later a prospective customer arrived at the firm's Which Computer Show stand, and asked the name of the Sales Director. He was told, apologetically that they hadn't got one!

Chris Curry has evidently been impressed by the ease with which Sinclair has kept the ball rolling from one firm to another. Curry set up his own company in 1979 – **ACORN COMPUTERS** – and he duly left Uncle Clive after the *ZX-80*, to work full-time on his own. **ACORN**, like **RADIONICS** and **SINCLAIR RESEARCH**, had its ups and downs and was eventually bailed out by **OLIVETTI**. Curry abandoned ship, but he's still in the game – he's the man behind the *Red Box* add-ons which we reviewed in the Christmas Special!

MORE PRE-HISTORY

SCIENCE OF CAMBRIDGE avoided portable machines at first. They produced a tiny bare-board computer called the *MK14*, and then the *ZX-80* – the first useful-looking computer to sell for under £100. The design of the Spectrum ROM is closely allied to that of the *ZX-80*, with the *ZX-81* – which actually *was* useful – as an intermediate step between the two machines.

In 1980 we were told that the *ZX-80* "would be linked to a flat-screen display." In May of 1981 Sinclair upgraded his promise, announcing a version of the *ZX-81* with a "four or five inch flat screen", scaled up from the **RADIONICS** pocket TV display . . . it

† The Sinclair Story, CRASH 13-19

88 – Pandora's Box?

SINCLAIR RIDES AGAIN

never turned up – even in prototype form.

In 1983 the *QL* was planned as a go-anywhere machine, with space for a column of U2 batteries along the back of the case. Portability went out of the window in the rush to get something onto the shelves, as the bottom began to drop out of the micro market.

GENESIS REVISITED

A design recognisably similar to that of the *Z88* was born early in 1984, partly in an attempt to salvage ideas left over from the development of the *QL* and the *LC-3*. The low-cost *LC-3* was the first, unreleased 'Super-Spectrum'. It was scrapped in 1982, when a follow-up didn't seem necessary, and **SINCLAIR RESEARCH** turned to grander designs.

The details of the planned portable were published in February 1985, and it was scheduled for launch 'in 1986'. At this stage the machine was based around the Spectrum design, with a *Z80* processor and support for Spectrum software. Built-in business packages were promised, along with 'bank-switched' plug-in memory cartridges. SA 'proper light-up display', again derived from the pocket TV, was considered essential.

"Liquid Crystal is rubbish", Sir Clive explained. "Nobody pursuing that avenue is getting anywhere. Nobody in the world has an answer to the flat display problem – except us."

PANDORA'S BOX

After a massive development effort, Sinclair engineers did manage to scale-up the *Microvision* display, but the result was not judged a great success. The new screen used a combination of lenses and mirrors to project a picture in the air between the lid and the base of the prototype machine. The idea was ingenious, and it worked after a fashion – but it was heavy, greedy for power, fragile, and ill-suited to mass-production . . . and that's being kind!

This machine was dubbed 'Pandora' inside the company. Like that of the 'Loki' proposal which I demolished in August 1986, this name was a rather obscure joke. According to ancient myth, Pandora was a character who made the mistake of opening a box in which all the evils of the world were trapped, along with one more benign quantity – hope. Opening the Pandora computer case could have released just about anything!

Under the terms of his sell-out, Sinclair is required to offer future computer designs to **AMSTRAD**. One look at Pandora was enough to put them off – they gave Sinclair permission to go it alone.

Z88 HARDWARE

The *Z88* has shed most of the outer trappings of 'Pandora'. It retains the cartridges and *Z80* processor, but has ended up with a liquid crystal display, bought in from the Japanese. The display is fairly clear, with dark blue letters on a grey background, but I wouldn't like to use it for long. It's very short and wide and the characters are much smaller than those of previous portable computers (like the **EPSOM** *HX-20* and the **TANDY** *100*). It's quite good as LCD displays go, but it's still sluggish, 'dotty' and cramped. In view of his earlier comments, I have a suspicion that Sinclair doesn't like it much either.

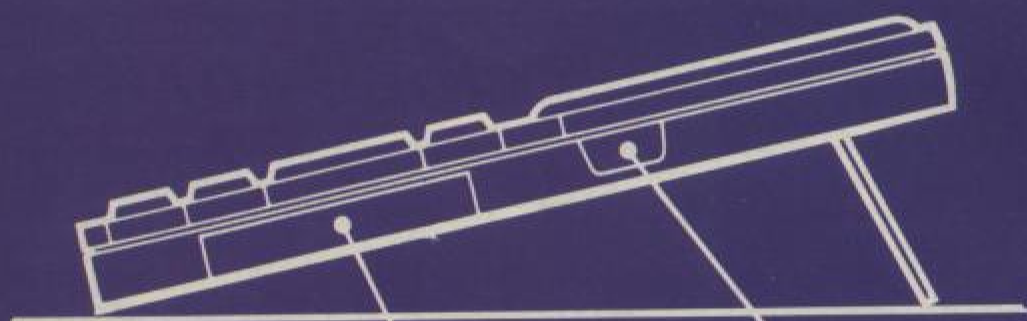
The LCD screen rules out Spectrum compatibility at a stroke, with its slow refresh rate and wide, short 64 x 640 pixel format. The word-processor uses eight 80 column text lines, with margins containing a menu and a 'page map' showing the page layout, with one dot for each character.

The Sinclair deal with **AMSTRAD** has been suggested as another reason for the *Z88*'s lack of Spectrum compatibility, but I think that argument should take second place to the practical considerations. The *Z88* has no output for a conventional 'CRT' display, and it seems unlikely that one will materialise – LCD and CRT display circuits have very little in common.

The *Z88* weighs less than two pounds, and is about the size of an A4 pad. It feels light, but sturdy. It runs on four Walkman batteries, apparently for 20 hours, with about a year's 'stand-by' power when you're not actually using the machine, but still want it to retain its memory contents. These are Sinclair's battery life figures, and anyone who has owned a C-5, Black Watch or Cambridge programmable calculator will view them with suspicion.

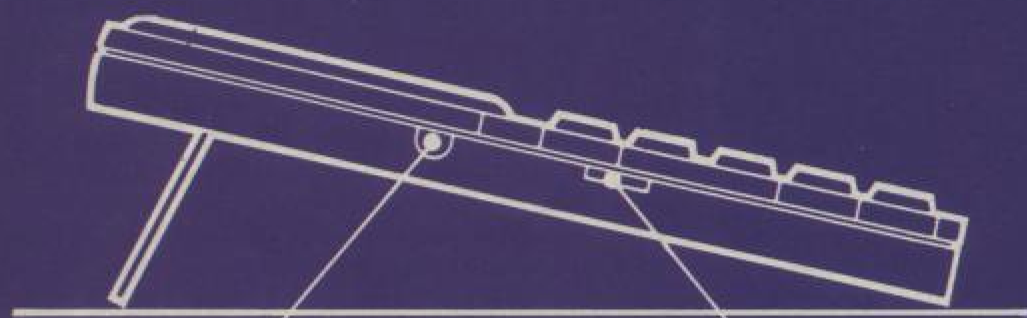
The keyboard is weird in design, but quite easy to use in practice. It is a continuous sheet of plastic, with raised keys. The material at the side of each key is thin, so that only the key you press moves as you type. Although it seems simpler, I prefer this keyboard to that of the Spectrum Plus and the QL. It's silent, which is a bit disconcerting, but as usual Sinclair can think of a good reason for every deviation from normality – he points out that it's much easier to hear yourself think in a room full of *Z88* owners ▶

SINCLAIR'S Z88 – Pandora's Box?



Z80 bus for future facilities expansion.

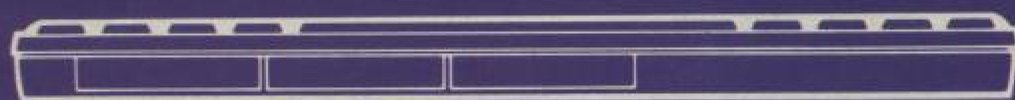
RS232 port for printer and micro connection.



Mains adapter port.

Screen contrast control.

Foot raises computer to 12½° for ease of use and viewing



Housing for up to three RAM or EPROM cartridges.

than it is in a typing pool!

I type for a living, and I'd be quite happy to use the *Z88* keyboard – but this is a very subjective judgement, and I'd advise you to have a go before ordering a *Z88*, especially if you're already an experienced typist. Journalists that I've spoken to come out about 50:50 for and against the *Z88* keyboard.

Z88 SYSTEM

It seems that – as usual for a Sinclair machine – the *Z88* has been launched long before it is ready. The prototype was running a neat Word Processor package, but the spreadsheet, database and diary software were nowhere to be seen. This software will have to be uncommonly reliable – there's not much point having batteries that can preserve data for a year if the software goes haywire and scrambles things, or locks the machine up, every few days.

The *Z88* will run BBC BASIC – a dialect much-lauded by those who know more about fashion than they do about computer science. BBC BASIC is faster and more expressive than ZX BASIC – but it's less friendly.

A version of BBC BASIC for the *Z80* processor has been available for several years, so it should not take long to get the core of it running on the *Z88*. It will be interesting to see how much support we get for the paged memory and LCD graphics. Will we be stuck with the 64K memory limit of other versions, on this machine which promises 'over 3 megabytes of instantly-addressable memory'?

The claims about the memory capacity of the *Z88* should be taken with a pinch of salt. There are slots for three ROM or RAM cartridges at the front of the machine, and 32K and 128K cartridges are promised to be available with the first machines in April, with a 1 megabyte version coming 'soon'. That will be built around the 'wafer scale integration' ideas that have been kicking around Sinclair's 'Metalab' for several years – but there's no sign yet of the £6 million needed to get those ideas into production.

The only standard interface is an RS-232 port, which allows access to modems, serial printers, and other computers – at least in theory. RS-232 interfacing is a black art at the best of times, and Sinclair serial interfaces have a reputation for idiosycracy.

PROVISIONAL VERDICT

I enjoyed reading the *Z88* brochure, and – as usual – I wanted to order one as soon as I'd finished. The design seems full of good ideas, but it's clearly not finished yet. **CAMBRIDGE COMPUTER** are talking about production levels of 10,000 machines a month, but this is a pretty meaningless figure, as it's the usual 'minimum order' quantity for mass-production of computers.

I'll be pleased, but surprised, if Sinclair can sell *Z88*'s in respectable numbers. **EPSOM**, **NEC** and **TANDY** have all attacked the A4 portable computer market and found slim pickings.

The appeal of a portable computer has been clear since **XEROX** came up with the idea of the *Dynabook*, long before the personal computer industry existed. The *Z88* is a step in that direction, and will doubtless appeal to some people, but the product hardly lives up to the slogan, 'full-facility, no-compromise computing' at the moment.

It's especially sad that Spectrum compatibility has been ruled out, because that could have given the *Z88* the mass-market appeal that it presently lacks. But Sinclair is still a man to watch, and – rest assured – CRASH will keep watching.

STOP PRESS . . . Amstrad have announced a Spectrum Plus Three. This will have one built-in disk drive in place of the Plus Two's cassette, and an operating system written by Locomotive Software, the firm's tame programming house. At the time of writing (early March) there's been no sight of a finished product, although that hasn't prevented less reputable magazines than CRASH from getting their crayons out.

The word is that boss Alan Sugar has given the development team until the end of March to sort out the design. We'll bring you all the facts, and intelligent analysis, as soon as the new machine materialises.





THE SPICE OF LIFE



A REAL mixed bag this month: one *Quilled*, one from the *GAC*, one from yesteryear, one icon-driven, and one bookware, how's that for variety! The *Quilled* game is from a small independent named MYSTIC, who have tried to take the *Quill* format and put some new life into it. *Imagination*, the *Graphic Adventure Creator* game from Peter Torrence, looks a little dry (like all *GAC* games), but it's playing around four different themes is novel. The blast from the past is 8TH DAY's *Four Minutes to Midnight*. Inspired by a Stephen King novel, it has now been re-released and served up with graphics and many new commands.

Using icons can be a blessing or a bugbear when it comes to adventuring, and in the case of ANCO's *The Kingdom of Krell* I'm not altogether convinced the icons make the going easier. The game does look good, however, filling 128K of memory, and deserves praise for stepping up to 128 if nothing else. The bookware program is, as you might have guessed, *The Growing Pains of Adrian Mole*, a LEVEL 9/MOSAIC/VIRGIN affair which I particularly enjoyed playing. The software follows the book (by Sue Townsend) and the TV series very closely, yet in my opinion the program has been constructed in a way which creates sufficient options to justify the addition of the computer game to the Mole phenomenon.

There was another arrival this month which was most welcome – a fanzine (The Adventurers Handbook) which had metamorphised into a full-blown, professionally bound and typed adventure booklet. What impressed me about *What Now?* is its thorough usefulness to people like myself (or anyone else who tends to have a crack at a lot of adventures). I think the authors of the booklet must be congratulated for upping the gloss, and still finding the time to keep up the standard. The contents page, which gives some insight into the multitude of maps, solutions, and articles on offer, is followed by a curt but informative news page. Reader's letters complete what is a very full and worthwhile publication. The cost is £1.50, H & D are the publishers and 1338 Ashton Old Road, Higher Openshaw, Manchester M11 1JG is their address, though with standards as high as theirs keep an eye open for *What Now?* in your local computer shop.

THE GROWING PAINS OF ADRIAN MOLE

Producer: **Virgin**
Price: **£9.95**
Authors: **Level 9**

"Being popular as well as intelligent isn't easy", is just one of the many profound observations which emanate from the poet of the Midlands, Adrian Mole – 15 and a quarter years old. We join our schoolboy hero at the turn of another new year, studying for O Levels but dreaming of A Levels and beyond. The only problem is that this is Thatcher's Britain, and intellectualism in general (and soppy non-violent pastimes such as poetry in particular) are positively frowned upon.

Adrian, a gangly and spotty adolescent, spends much of the game struggling to make sense of life at the end of a cul-de-sac in Leicester, a town just north of errr, and south of errr; exactly. Although Adrian's pubescent fumblings with girls such as Sharon Botts and his long-standing crush Pandora, are amusing, there is much more to the Adrian Mole Diaries than this. In these books and computer games we take a wry look at provincial Britain, where the people who created and settled the industrial heartlands watch the antics of 10 Downing Street with bemused disbelief. Adrian has set his sights on a studio flat in Hampstead with no interruptions from 'Hawkers, Traders or Philistines', but for now we must suffer his growing pains against the backcloth of the Falklands (he eventually found the islands on his map under a cake crumb), the water strike, and powerful lobbies which ply children with chocolate and have the Moles wondering why 'socks have their ingredients listed but not all foods'?

The computer game follows closely both the book and the recent Thames television series. Having bought the book for this review, and caught some of the TV programs, I must say that familiarity with the scripts will enable you to gain a higher mark when playing the computer game. The score is your prime concern during play, your aim being to increase it by making Adrian as popular with everyone as possible. As you might guess, this is not always an easy matter due to competing interests (eg Pandora or Nigel's views in the Pink Brigade), or due



to unforeseen negative results to saintly acts. These unpredictable twists in plot are what keep you from the higher, more complimentary-sounding scores. If a game is going well you might rise from the likes of Worthy Youth (from a start of the 40%-rated Lowly Schoolboy) through the Poet ratings to Worthy Prodigy (76%), and on to the heady heights of Suburban Paragon of Virtue (81%), but it will take all four parts (between which ratings are transferable) to go very far into the eighties.

A criticism which has been levelled at these MOSIAC BOOKWARE products (in this case marketed by VIRGIN) concerns the games' ability to only withstand one run-through,



as with a book. Having played the first part of this game several times, I have noticed a few devices to counter this criticism. After playing through the part once you would expect a re-run to see you making all the correct decisions; but not only is it hard to remember the right choice between the 3 options (made more difficult by the program swapping round the question order), it will be noticed that certain sections vary in content and order. In the first part the canal sequence involving Mr Mole's government scheme reclamation job may either be missing entirely or dealt with at great length. Similarly, the toothache sequence may be touched upon or agonised over for some time.

Curiously, this variation can be responsible for a justified criticism in that the program lacks the chronology of the book and hence people unfamiliar with the Moles and their environs may need some prior introduction to the colourful characters which inhabit their world. For example, at the start of Part Three we are told of Adrian's father going to see a Brett, and a Stick Insect. Readers of the book will immediately recognise the nicknames of his father's lover and the offspring of their union, but what of newcomers? The plot can also suffer due to the attempts to vary the game each time it is played. Take Adrian's relationship with Pandora which is fine at the end of one part and then mysteriously cool at the beginning of another, the reason being lost in text which may not pop up until these parts are played several times.

Before finishing, could I just mention some points about the structure of this four-part adventure. Each part can be loaded separately and then played repeatedly to obtain a higher score. As there are two parts per side, it is wise to stop the tape immediately after loading parts one or three, the first parts on sides A and B respectively. When playing the parts in a row do not be alarmed if at first the programs do not seem to be loading as this ignored information is only taken up if that part is being loaded on its own (a small white square appears at bottom right when the program is loading proper). As I've mentioned, the score does transfer between parts when the computer is not switched off; it would be impossible to achieve a high score otherwise. To quit a part, or to ask for help, option 4 is your choice (where RESTART is suggested to quit and begin a part again).

I consider the Adrian Mole games to be very entertaining, as they draw on some great material from the Sue Townsend books. This game, the follow-up to *The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole*, is not perfect (when pictures are being drawn, and sometimes text zips up and off the screen before it can be read; also typographical errors crop up now and again) but it doesn't half keep you enthralled. Now I might have said 'doesn't half give you a run for your money' but a £9.95 price tag does not compare favourably with the METHUEN paperback book which costs just £1.95. While contemplating whether a tenner outlay is worth the pleasure of guiding Mole through his adolescence, perhaps you might like to consider these two quotes, one from the program and the second from the book. The first concerns some perfectly reasonable advice to a cigarette manufacturer, "I have written to Rothmans offering to improve their health warning. The current one is very badly laid out." And how about this one for a comic ending to an innocuous-looking paragraph: "My father was ironing baby clothes when I got home from school. He said, 'If you laugh. I'll kill you'. My mother was feeding the baby, with her feet on the dog's back. It was a charming domestic picture, only spoiled when my father put the ironing board away and went home to his other family."



COMMENTS

Difficulty: about as difficult as opening a Mars bar
Graphics: weird, 'prepaid post cubist through mottled glass' school of art
Presentation: just fine
Input facility: press keys one to three
Response: fast
General rating: great material

Atmosphere	88%
Vocabulary	n/a
Logic	75%
Addictive quality	82%
Overall	88%

FOUR MINUTES TO MIDNIGHT

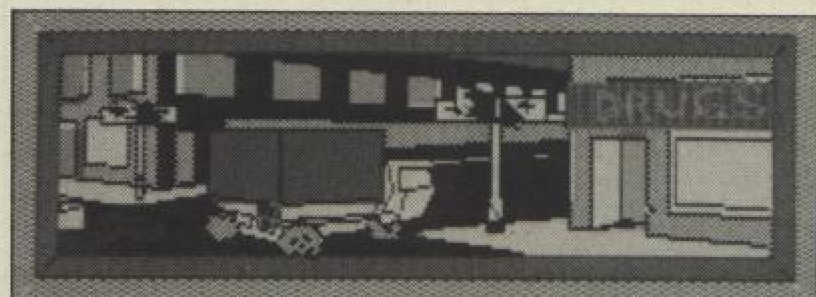
Producer: **8th Day**
Price: **£2.99**
Authors: **Michael White, Martin Rennie**

8TH DAY SOFTWARE received some pretty fine reviews when they began their *Games Without Frontiers* series almost two years ago. Now these *Quilled* games are to be re-released for new computer owners, with many additional features which will make these cheapies even better buys. Obvious updates include the inclusion of graphics on some locations, and RAM save and load. Also, there is a text-only version of the game on the flip-side for ascetics who prefer a wordier approach. 8TH DAY are also considering re-releasing some of the other five games from their *Games Without Frontiers* label. These will be rated for difficulty (Beginner, Standard and Advanced), so a beginner can find a comfortable level from which to progress.

The first of these releases, *Four Minutes to Midnight*, was inspired by the Stephen King novel, The Stand, and follows you and your fellow survivor's attempts to come to terms with a bacteriological catastrophe which has devastated America, wiping out some 90% of the population. Why the other 10% can shake off the bacteria isn't yet clear, perhaps they're immune to the bug. They form groups to try and re-establish order from the chaos following the outbreak. Journeying across America you must find as many companions as you can, utilising their skills to help you overcome the many problems that litter the road to a more stable society. But there is more on your mind; wouldn't it be a good idea to seize the chance now to rid the menace of nuclear arms, now that the silos lie unguarded. Perhaps with a party of like-minded people, the warheads could be de-activated and a new generation spared another holocaust.

Impressive new features have been grafted onto these old adventures to bring them bang up-to-date. Due to the nature of the game, the command RECRUIT (DAVE) has been included, with PARTY giving the make-up of the team you have built up so far. A member is dropped with LEAVE, while FEED is used to direct food at those members most in need of strength. To help you decide who is most worthy the command, HISTORY gives you the low-down on a character's past, while STATISTICS give you a character's profile with all important technical, engineering, social and strength attributes., However, due to a reluctance of members to divulge their respective pasts, a psychic is needed to release these personal facts.

You kick off on the forecourt of a small gasoline station which is in a terrible, deserted state. But what's this? A car is careering down the road towards the station and if not stopped, will turn the





whole scene into a blazing inferno. You're only given a few moves to resolve this situation, so you can see you have a very tough start to this one and the game's tag of Advanced Difficulty makes itself felt right from the off. Finding the members which make up your team isn't a picnic either, although Dave obligingly pops up from within the first few locations. At just about the time when things are beginning to run smoothly, the time element comes into play with the sun deciding its had enough for one day. SLEEP and WAIT are the obvious correctives, although a quick succession of LOOKS (L) does the trick along with just about anything else. Getting the BMX bicycle speeds you on your way, while entering every building or object will see you recruiting another member before your nerves crack.

Four Minutes to Midnight is available by mail-order from 8TH DAY, 18 Flaxhill, Moreton, Wirral L46 7UH. The games were well received on their first release some time ago and now, in their improved format, they represent good value for money. The difficult nature of the adventure, and its sophisticated commands such as RECRUIT, TIME, and HISTORY, should ensure a following amongst adventure buffs.

COMMENTS

Difficulty: not to be taken lightly
Graphics: below average
Presentation: okay
Input facility: verb/noun
Response: fast
General rating: classic cheap game

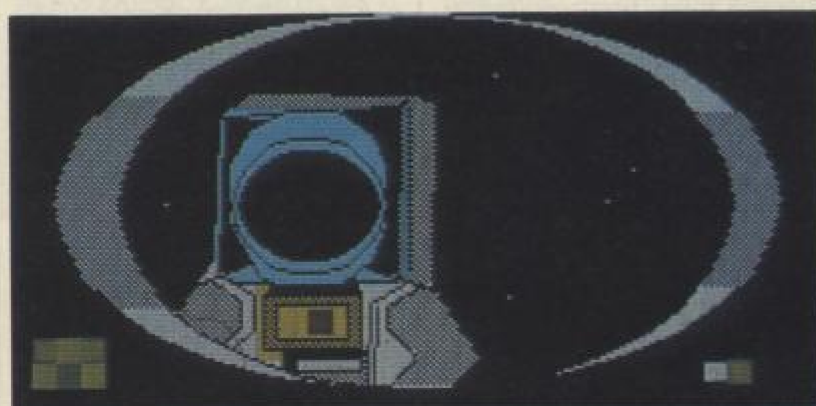
Atmosphere	75%
Vocabulary	80%
Logic	74%
Addictive Quality	75%
Overall	76%

IMAGINATION

Producer: **Firebird**
Price: **£1.99**
Author: **Peter Torrence**

Yes it's *that* Peter Torrence again, he of *Subsunk* and *Seabase Delta* fame, following up his first *GAC* foray with this one here, a trip into your average computer whizzkid's

split asunder (eg D followed by ISC on a new line!) doesn't half look untidy. Further, as I mentioned last month concerning *GAC* games, there is a tendency to be left with the end of the last description capping the new one – a most unsightly state of affairs. All of this follows the most irritating loading routine imaginable (short squeals,



nately the universal 'L' is not accepted and LO is mistaken for LOAD. This is a small gripe, but it gets bigger the more often LOOK is called into service! Similarly 'I' is insufficient to call up an inventory of your possessions.

Small exceptions out of the way, this really is quite a good trip round pretty familiar themes. The four titles of the games from which to choose say it all: 2002 – a very odd day in space, The Lords of Half Past Nine (a good two and a half hours early!), Panic Miner 9000 90 Niner, and Raid Over Margate. We are told that these games are linked in subtle and amusing ways, and so it turns out, with each game inextricably linked to the other and with items and problems zipping about all over the place.

Imagination is the game's title,

ture scrolls off in an untidy fashion. The text which does occur is not particularly descriptive, but it is sufficient to get some good jokes in (eg the AA time machine box which is decidedly smaller inside than it looks from the outside), and there's enough of a plot to keep even the most casual adventurer entertained. In writing style though, perhaps too many sentences begin with 'You are on/in'. Peter Torrence has made his name in budget adventure, and this one will do his reputation no harm.

COMMENTS

Difficulty: needs some thought
Graphics: sufficient



worthy to take their place in society. Well, guess what, you've just turned eighteen, and there you stand on the edge of the wilderness, ready to be sent off by your friends, family and elders. Beyond stretches a bleak, mysterious, forbidding landscape. The last thing you can remember is your father proposing a toast to your future and safe return. When you regain consciousness, the crowd is gone and you are alone in the vast wilderness known as the Kingdom of Krell.

Something which you will soon realise about the land of Krell is your view of it differs from the location description, as it is the adjacent location that you see in the direction you are currently looking. This is somewhat similar to *Lords of Midnight* in style, but I don't think it works quite as well here – there is too much sudden variation in topography to mimic the feeling of genuine travel over a real land. Hence a barren grassy plain will be accompanied by the picture of a river and trees, and as often as not, will be followed by the picture of a plain when you are now by a river.



In another area you have entered the mouth of a cave with damp walls, and the picture is of a green plain! I'd admit that it would be hard to eliminate this problem, given the game's design, without copying the system used in Midnight. The game design is again found to be weak when fighting the skeleton, where hitting the creature causes a deep gash which for my liking sounds too much like a fleshwound, and describing a skeleton as either 'dead', or as a 'carcass', doesn't quite ring true.

This game very much finds its roots in *Dungeons and Dragons*, with an unfaltering loyalty to that world's terminology. Strength, Wisdom, Intelligence, Dexterity, Constitution, and Charisma are all here. As with many role-playing games, amusing ratings are in evidence such as the far from complimentary Dung-Dweller.

The Kingdom of Krell is a vast, real-time adventure with a multitude of independent characters. The main menu allows the player to Move, Sleep, select Weapons, cast Spells, Take and Drop, as well as Talk to characters. Taking the Talk option to illustrate the sub menus, in this case Pleasantly, Normal, and Nastily represent the different sorts of speech possible. If a nasty creature is encountered it is possible simply to give it the slip by moving on, otherwise Attack can be evoked.

Although I had reservations during the early stages of play (including annoyance at only one arrow key to return to the main menu rather than the two together outlined in the instructions), I must say that after a while the effort that has gone into producing this game does begin to make itself apparent. Once the icon system is mastered time can be taken noticing just how well the adventure is served up, and how good the graphics really are – both pictures and icons.

COMMENTS

Difficulty: you can play straight away but completion is another matter
Graphics: very good
Presentation: very smart
Input facility: icons
Response: adequate
General rating: very interesting

Atmosphere	80%
Vocabulary	68%
Logic	72%
Addictive quality	85%
Overall	86%

RED LION

Producer: **Mystic Software**
Price: **£2.50**
Authors: **C Ward, L Donaghey, S Lynch**

The Red Lion sounds like a pub, and in many ways it provides just as much entertainment. What this intrepid team of adventurers have come up with is a *Quilled* game – but with a fresh approach. A sincere attempt to do away with the 'You Can'ts' seems to have paid off, as the program skips along merrily with comments to keep you amused all the while (even if you are barking up the wrong tree and a little askew progress-wise). *Quilled* games are notorious for their avoidance of more complex notions (such as character communication), but this adventure tackles the issue most laudably with an easily-worked set of speech structures. Finally, it will be no secret to readers of this column that it has always been my wish to see the verbs SEARCH and EXAMINE defined more strictly in adventuring, and that very task has been admirably executed in this game.

Scrolling in neat readable chunks, the story owes much to *Lord of the Rings*, with demonic happenings in the east spreading westwards. Here's how it goes . . .

Centuries ago, while mining in the Black Mountains, the dwarves discovered a large ruby. They called it 'The Red Lion' and held it as their greatest treasure. They were blissfully unaware of the ruby's mystical properties, but there were some abroad who were not so gullible. The Orclord, Auron, knew the full significance of their find and launched an attack on the peoples of the Black Mountains, hoping to claim the jewel for himself. After the bloody battle which ensued, both the Red Lion and the Orclord disappeared. Many years later there emerged from the east a cruel and powerful sorcerer who became known to all as the Mire Lord. He was in fact none other than the Orclord himself, who had spent the intervening years feeding off the ruby's power and becoming an ever more powerful tyrant. The Mire Lord now poses a great threat to all the people of the land – he must be defeated and the source of his power wrenched from his evil grasp!

You can probably guess from the introduction that this game tries its best to please and to deal with the rather less engaging idiosyncrasies of adventure, sprucing them up and adding features for a more enjoyable trip. I've already touched upon the differentiation of SEARCH and EXAMINE. This is something which really adds atmosphere, as the word EXAMINE is now associated with looking closely at an object (and no more), while SEARCH is reserved for those things which only a detailed prodding and moving can unearth. Take the warrior's dead body, where EXAMINE points to the 'two deep fang-marks in the dead man's neck', while SEARCH WARRIOR reveals a cloak (admittedly, this example isn't the best, as you might say that examining a body should reveal a cloak – but I think you'll get the gist of the argument). Examining the cloak furthers your investigation with 'The cloak bears the symbol of a sword over flowing water.' Searching the cloak finds you nothing, which isn't helpful considering your plight in the first fifteen or so locations, where a store trader requires money you just don't have and a Snyzer just won't let you at his key . . . even after consuming a flagon of wine (he could have at least dozed off)!

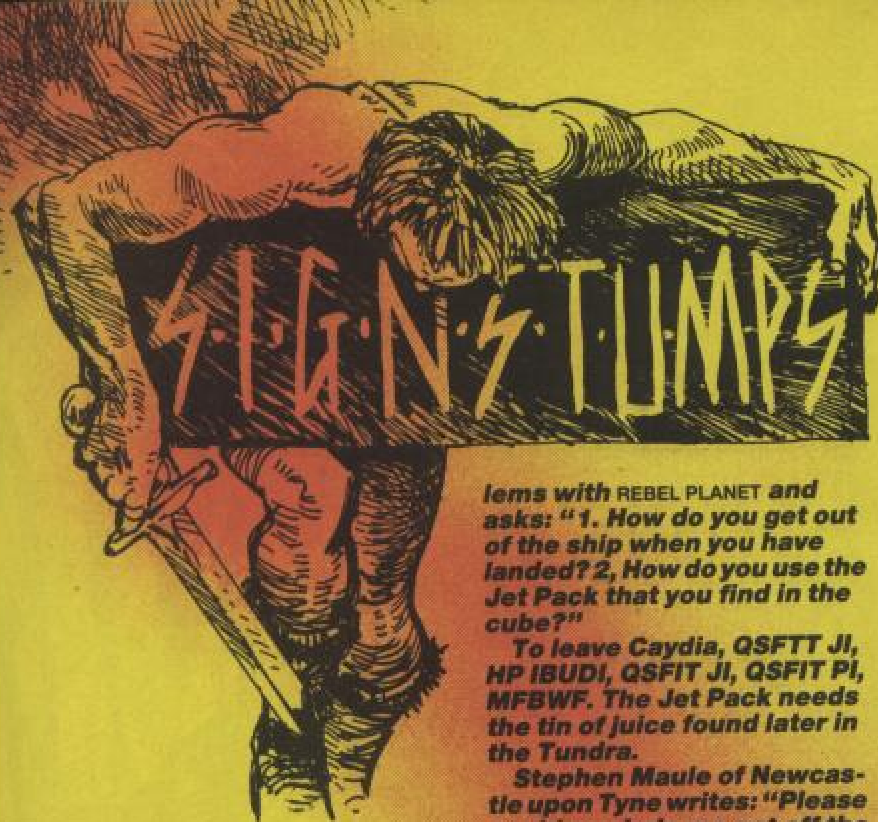
Leaving aside the top marks that this game gets for technical competence, its plot and storyboard really shine. Take the area of the river, imaginatively named the Dragon's Tail. Here a sign says 'Ring for the ferry: no charge' rounding off a location description which mentions the river's dangerous undercurrents. The bell emits a clear resonant tone, and presently beckons an old man who hobbles to the river bank carrying a large boat which he drops on the water. The warning of the rivers tempestuous nature and the forbidding "After you, sir" speak for themselves, but what I liked here is the ability to examine everything from the river (another warning: 'The river thunders rapidly southwards') to irrelevant asides such as the description given the bell ('It is made of iron and is fixed into a stone').

Red Lion is a well-researched piece of software, and shows many features of which I most heartily approve. The main text is a soft yellow on a black background with white input, while a tasteful blue highlights points of interest from within the descriptions. The EXAMINE command is most helpful and informative, and as if this were not enough, it's supported by an equally useful and more specifically designed SEARCH option. The full vocabulary is listed at the start, and can be called up at any time during play. But I have left the best till last – the game can offer the chance of talking to characters in a *Quilled* game, with the constructions TALK TO or ADDRESS character. This can lead to useful information being extracted by way of the TELL ME ABOUT command (which can be shortened to ABOUT). *Red Lion* is a text-only game, available mail-order from MYSTIC, 67 Fergleen Park, Galliagh, Derry, N. Ireland BT48 8LF.

COMMENTS

Difficulty: not difficult
Graphics: none
Presentation: good use of colour in text
Input facility: verb/noun
Response: fast
General rating: a cut above usual mail-order

Atmosphere	87%
Vocabulary	86%
Logic	85%
Addictive quality	85%
Overall	86%



There was another massive mailbag for SIGNSTUMPS this month, and once again questions were spread over a large number of games. I'll try to answer questions from as many people as possible, but first I would like to thank all those who have sent in solutions, and without who's help SIGNSTUMPS just wouldn't be possible.

Adrian Mansell *and* C. Pullard *from Tipton, West Midlands are having a few problems with* SORCERER OF CLAYMORGUE CASTLE *and ask: "1. Where do you store the stars? 2. How do you use the Methusela Spell without growing old and dying? 3. Where do you find the Fire Fly Spell?"*

The stars should be deposited in the Forest of Enchantment, but first you will need the Fire Fly Spell. This is found across the lava flow if you MPPL ESBHPO and HP IPMF. To prevent death from using the Methusela Spell, don't use it till near the end of the game.

Christian Carri *from Hindhead, Surrey writes: "I am stuck neck-high in* THE COLOUR OF MAGIC*. Can you please tell me how to get past the Troll when you are leaving the city? Also, have the cat and the saucer of milk got any purpose? Can you do anything with the boxes and crates in the cellar of the Broken Drum?"*

All you need to do to pass the Troll is BUYBDL USPMM – if you have done all the good deeds in the first part of the game, that is. Giving the saucer of milk to the cat is one of these good deeds.

On the same game, Paul Dowling *from Ireland asks: "How on discworld do you kill the monster in the temple of Bel-Shamaroth and get out, or are you even supposed to invoke him at all?"*

In the Wide Room FYBN SPDLT to find the crystal. To get rid of Bel-Shamaroth just UISPX DSZTUBM. Then wait for Hurn to summon his horse to ride off safely.

Scott Ramsey *of East Preston, Sussex is having problems with* REBEL PLANET *and asks: "1. How do you get out of the ship when you have landed? 2, How do you use the Jet Pack that you find in the cube?"*

To leave Caydia, QSFTT JI, HP IBUDI, QSFIT JI, QSFIT PI, MFBWF. The Jet Pack needs the tin of juice found later in the Tundra.

Stephen Maule of Newcastle upon Tyne writes: "Please could you help me get off the island in Mindshadow. I can get to the shore near the mountains and the Quicksand (with the help of the map from the cave), but cannot get any further." To attract the Ship you will need to start a fire, so drop the straw and bang rock with steel.

Several Adventurers are having difficulty progressing in KENTILLA*.* Bryan Davies *in Bedford asks: "How do I deal with the ward of disintegration in the study in Grako's Tower?"*

At the same time, Andrew Sibley *from Milton Keynes is stuck near the beginning of the game, and Lee Yimms of Sheffield is having difficulty with the gargoyle in Tylon's castle.*

To destroy the ward, TBZ TBHBHPP to activate staff and then IJU XBSE XJUI TUBGG. If you are not wearing the gold ring you will not be able to see the ward. To progress from the first part of the game you will need to cross the river, you can either swim across or throw the rope and swing. To leave Tylon's castle you will need to pull the arm of the gargoyle to open the door to the teleport.

C. Roberts *from Bracknell writes: "Please could you help me with* VERY BIG CAVE ADVENTURE*: 1. How do you get past the Python? 2. How do you get past the Art Gallery? 3. Is it possible to get a ticket to take out a library book? 4. Should I do anything in the Space Invaders room? 5. Should I do anything to the pillar box? 6. What good does the black rod with the star on the end do? 7. Will the Troll help me at all?"*

1. PQFO DBO found in the vast hall and the bird will do the rest; 2. In the art gallery wait until the Jester appears, and PQFO WBMWF on gas canister; 3. No; 4. First defeat the invaders and then FYBN DIBSBDUFST to find the mother ship. Then PQFO BJSMPDL to find Moon Crystal; 5. FYBN QJMMBS if you have the SFE LFZ. You can now progress to part 2; 6. The rod is used in part 2 to create a bridge; 7. No, the Troll must be destroyed.

Peter Fulbrook *from Hounslow, Middlesex writes: "The things that have me completely stumped are listed below: 1.* NEVER ENDING STORY *– What do I do with the crystal and how do I get to new locations from the tower at the start of the game? I cannot seem to progress any further than the easily found locations; 2.* GREMLINS *– How do I light the torch and weld the controls, also how do I start the projector? 3.* PRICE OF MAGIK *– How do I deal with the giant slug? 4.* WORM IN PARADISE *– Where do I get the invitation to the private party, what is the well of souls for, what purpose is the Dagget and where do I get the ticket for the boat? Oh – also what is the crack in my habihome for?"*

In NEVER ENDING STORY*, the crystal is needed later on in the game. As I have said several times, to progress out of the first few locations get the horn, go to the edge of the multi-coloured desert and blow the horn. When Falkor appears, get Falkor and say Falkor fly south.*

ENCRYPTION CORNER

It's easy to speak Brewster!

ENGLISH:	ZABCDEFGHIJKL
BREWSTER:	ABCDEFGHIJKLM
ENGLISH:	MNOPQRSTUVWXY
BREWSTER:	NOPQRSTUVWXYZ

In GREMLINS *you need the igniter from the drawer, and the gas bottle and welding torch from the station. Then go to the garage, PQFO WBMWF, MJHIU TPSDI and XFME DPOUSPMT. In* PRICE OF MAGIK *throw the salt to kill the slug. In* WORM IN PARADISE *the invitation is found by the dagger behind the socialist's wallpaper. The well of souls is scenery. You can buy a ticket for the riverboat from the travel agent. The cracks in the habihome fold down into a bed by SAY 'BED'.*

That's it for another month, Keep on sending in your questions as well as any help you can offer to:

SIGNSTUMPS, P.O. BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1AQ.

S·U·P·E·R·H·E·R·O·E·S

This month we have two double SUPERHEROES. The first is Andrew Orwin of Newark who grabbed the APACHE GOLD *and became the first person to hang up his boots after his* SPY TREK*. The other two-game SUPERHERO is a hero indeed, as he was the first SUPERHERO (*WITCH'S CAULDRON *Sep 85) and has been first at the post no less than six times (the others were* WARLORD *Nov 85,* THE BOGGIT *Oct 86,* VERY BIG CAVE *Nov 86, and this month's double,* COLOUR OF MAGIC *and* KAYLETH*). Of course I speak of none other than John Wilson of Rochdale, who always supplies indisputable evidence of his achievements in the form of full solution sheets which are invaluable when it comes to helping adventurers still struggling months after the SUPERHERO date.*

Let's have a look at this month's statistics, beginning with the MOSAIC *release programmed by the* RAM JAM CORPORATION *and based on the best-selling novel by Dick Francis*

'I am writing to tell you that I completed the adventure TWICE SHY *by* MOSAIC *on Jan 16 at 4.17pm. The game ends when the police arrest Angelo, Eddy and Harry at the Keithly's house after they kidnap Donna and Sarah, and after John fails to deliver the tapes. 'You sink into your armchair and realise it is all over'. Indeed! Even though the presentation and flexibility of the game were brilliant, I found it rather short and easy.' So writes Andrew Manny, Swansea.*

On Jan 11 INCENTIVE'S APACHE GOLD *was gathered up by Andrew Orwin Of Newark, Notts. At the end of the adventure it says 'An Apache Tomb *** the Apache Chief's Gold *** !!! You're rich partner !!! Spend it wisely! Then five days later on Jan 16 I completed* AMERICANA'S SPY TREK*. The message on completion of this adventure was 'Well done Mike. You have found tne plans and your adventure is complete'.*

John Wilson of Rochdale has done it again, but with two games this month! He says, 'Yep. it is me again with another of my eternal cries for fame and fortune (well, maybe fame anyway)! I completed Fergus McNeil's latest epic COLOUR OF MAGIC *at 10.54 am on Friday Jan 30 1987 . . . well I think I did! Anyway, judge for yourself after you have read the final screen . . . 'Rincewind dropped. Below the whole universe twinkled at him. There was great A'Tuin, huge and ponderous. There was the little Disc moon. There was the distant gleam that could only be the Potent Voyager. And there were all the stars, like powdered diamonds spilled on black velvet . . . The whole of creation was waiting for Rincewind to drop in. He did so. There didn't seem to be any alternative'.*

Please accept this as yet another claim for SUPERHERO. On Feb 10 at 10.14 pm I completed KAYLETH*. The final screen is as follows: Kayleth bursts! His reign's over! Your's has just begun, Yurek the Great! Well done!*

FANGS MAKES TWO POINTS

Dear Mr Brewster,
Having just read your review of *Dracula*, I would like to briefly take up a couple of the points you raised.

Firstly, although the early digitised graphics contain little of interest to blood and gore fans, many of the graphics in parts two and three are *very* gruesome indeed – however, since said graphics are invariably grainy and indistinct, it tends to be the accompanying text that provides the real gore. Personally, I found this all distasteful and contrived, but that's probably just me.

Secondly, I too found the character set a real pain, so I decided to change it back to a more legible one. Anyone wishing to do the same need only follow these simple rules.

1. Load the BASIC leader as per normal (ie the first set of red, then blue lines)
2. Stop the tape, press BREAK and in Immediate Mode (ie without line numbers) enter POKE 23899,201 : POKE 23900,0 : POKE 23901,0. Start the tape and when loaded
3. NEW the program to reset system variables
4. Type RANDOMISE USR 24933 to start the game

Finally, having played most of the game, I'm not sure that it really deserves the ratings that you awarded. Although it has pretensions to both literacy and 'interactive fiction', the latter is certainly sacrificed for the former. At too many points in the narrative the same old trick of not mentioning something that would be blindingly obvious is used to conceal pertinent information. At various times, the existence of a bell on a desk, and old lady sitting opposite, a rack of letters, a coat, a tree and a staircase, are artificially concealed. I don't think I'm being over-fussy in saying that an EXAMINE command should be programmed as a means of real discovery, not as a method of creating problems. Having to examine a desk before finding that it has a bell on it just strikes me as lazy design, a lack of imagination from the writer. On the whole, logic is frequently sacrificed at the altar of artifice, and I think your rating in this respect is unreasonably high.

Finally, I appreciate that limitations on time make it impossible to play-test a large game like *Dracula* properly – and it is difficult to escape the sneaking suspicion that software houses occasionally give-in to the temptation of loading all the best parts of an adventure into the opening scenes, in order to trick the harassed reviewer into giving a better review than the overall game deserves?

C J Livesey, Dorset

THE DO'S OF ADVENTURING

Dear Derek,
Many people, seem to be stuck in almost every adventure game they own and I think perhaps they are playing adventures in the wrong way. I have below a list of ideas which may help adventurers to overcome their difficulties:

1. Examine or inspect everything you find in a game. Clues are often hidden in the objects.
2. Sometimes useful things are not mentioned in the text and you have to use logic to figure them out, eg in *Sorcerer of Claymorgue Castle* there is a cabinet which is not printed in the text.
3. If you come across a very strange word in an adventure, say it out. It is usually a magic word or password
4. Wear everything you find in a game: helmet, gas mask etc. You may need them sooner than you think.
5. Before starting the adventure, look at your inventory. You may well have something very useful, eg in the *Golden Baton* you are carrying a box of matches at the beginning which are vital and mustn't get lost
6. If you do something like press a button in a game and nothing happens, it might be that you have triggered something else in a different location.
7. Map all the locations. Very often you'll need to retrace your steps.
8. Look back at old games you have completed if you are totally stuck in a recent adventure. Many puzzles are often taken from old games
9. While playing an adventure, it's best to have with you a Thesaurus. Difficulties are usually found in the program's unfriendly vocabulary, eg in *Temple of Vran* you find an axe and try to cut down a tree. Both CUT TREE and FELL TREE don't work but CHOP TREE does the trick.
10. Play adventures with another person together. Two heads are better than one.

Alex Ng, Clwyd, North Wales

I enjoyed your letter very much, Alex. I especially liked the way you cited examples to back up some of your points and I would very much welcome similar letters from other readers.

DB

LONE WOLF

Dear Mr Brewster,
In reply to Derek Jenkin's letter (issue 37), I would just like to say that the two LONE WOLF computer games (as far as I know *Ice Halls of Terror* and *Caverns of Kalte* were never released) are *not* worth buying – the books however, are. I find them absorbing, and nerve-wracking. The atmosphere is superb and the detail behind them astounding. Anyone with even the slightest interest in Fantasy should have a look for these books.

Malcolm Perryman, Surrey

Thanks a lot for the news, Malcolm, it's always nice to know what happened to the great projects of the past – and good to know there are knowledgable adventurers out there who are willing to share their research with Trail readers.

DB

KNOTS LOOSENING

Dear Derek,
Here is the solution to *Tangled Tale* (a Double Play Adventure). As this is not a conventional adventure, the following is a list of locations, and the solutions to the problem or purpose of the scene. At the end of the list will be the basic solution and how to finish the adventure.

Playing the Adventure: There are nine locations, five of which have riddles and problems to solve. These five lead on to a location where two further problems must be solved. Each problem in the five locations unties a knot in the string - and all the knots need to be undone before Alice can be rescued.

The locations are built in a circle - so nine locations from your starting location returns you back to it (in either direction).

The Locations
THERE EREHT
The starting location
HUMPTY'S WALL
For Knots 1 & 2
    To get to the knots: UC
    First knot (right): PEAR
    Second knot (left): MILE
THE CATERPILLAR
For knots 3 & 4
    To get to the knots: EGBD
    Third knot (left): 1
    Fourth knot (right): BIN
THE TULLEY WOODS
Don't hang about here - you will most likely get killed. Has NO bearing on the adventure. Enter LOOK for explanation.
THE WHITE KNIGHT
    To get to the knots: 5024
    Knot Five (left): POKE
    Sixth knot (right): TEN
THE WHITE RABBIT
    To get to the knots: ZZZ
    Seventh knot (right): DICE
    Eighth knot (left): TEA,SEA,SET,SOT,HOT (NB 1 word at a time)!
THE RED QUEEN'S CASTLE
    Where Alice is trapped (see solution below)
THE MAD HATTER
    To get to the knots: 801
    Ninth knot (right): KDTE
    Tenth knot (left): YVAN
THE EIGHTH SQUARE
Come here when Alice is rescued (see solution below).

Solution
Undo all the knots (locations two, three, five, six and eight) by entering the main keyword at the location. Then going right or left and entering the answer as shown for the specific knot (the knots can be undone in any order of the two together). When all the knots are undone (examine the string!) go to location seven. (You should note that after each set of two knots are undone, you end up at location one again). At location seven (castle) GO UP, you will see a grate, LOOK GRATE and you will see Alice. LOWER STRING and Alice ties the key to the string. PULL STRING and you now have the key; GO DOWN, OPEN DOOR, Alice joins you, RIGHT, RIGHT and you are now at the eighth square - and the end of the adventure.

Bryan Steele, Middlesex.

Well done, Bryan, for unravelling all those knots you land this month's £20 worth of software.

DB

OLD GAMES

Dear Derek,
Regarding the difficulty in getting old games (Feb CRASH), I wondered if the person looking for *Subsunk* has tried writing direct to FIREBIRD. I haven't tried them myself so far, but I have had excellent results from GILSOFT, CCS and 8TH DAY (after trying in vain to get games like *Faerie* and *Staff of Yarand* locally). All of these companies sent lists of their games and appear to offer all the earlier as well as current ones. Failing that, sometimes software shops have a noticeboard service – our local shop does – where quite a few people pay a small sum to advertise either a wanted game or secondhand games for sale. Also, The Adventurer's Handbook has often featured 'Want Ads'. Finally, a browse around the 'Junk Boxes' in record or software shops can sometimes pay dividends.

While on the subject of ancient games, could some kind soul help with *Ring of Darkness*? A few people have mentioned it in back copies of CRASH, and I have had it some time, but have been unable to complete it as the dungeon parts won't load properly. I would be very grateful for a poke to enable me to get over the mountains and rivers, as I like mapping it, but it's most frustrating to be sent back to the beginning again as the only way to load a saved game is to load the whole thing again from scratch.

Margo Porteous, Derby

MONEY TALKS

Dear Derek,
In response to your comments to Daniel Donneenemma's letter featured in February's CRASH, I simply had to put pen to paper. I for one have always held the belief that you dislike utility-written adventures. I'm referring specifically to the *Quill*, and I'm sure a great number of other CRASH readers share this belief.

I've just sifted through the past six month's (31 - 36 incl.) reviews featured in Adventure Trail, and found nearly half to be *Quilled*. Only one or two of these adventures could loosely be said to fit your comments in reply to Daniel's letter on what you look for in *Quilled* releases.

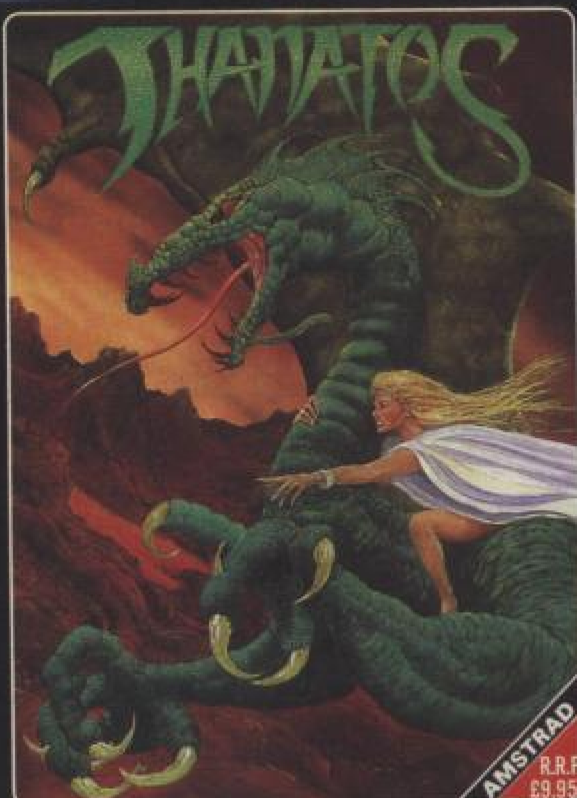
I'm currently playing an adventure called *Operation Stallion* from WRIGHTCHOICE SOFTWARE (one of the few Scottish software houses) which does fit your comments to a tee. A good, long, credible storyline, excellent graphics, redesigned character set, friendly vocabulary, good atmospheric location descriptions, not to mention a £500 prize. I know the game went on sale in December, so where's the review? If you fail to review the games that contain what you say you look for in a good utility-written adventure, what hope is there for the smaller software houses?

Please print this letter as I think it contains some valid points and as a female I would like to see more letters appearing in your column from the fairer sex, instead of always from the boys.

Katrina Kelly, Glasgow

Bear with me a minute Katrina, I'm just going to read your letter again. Ah yes, right. Well the first point is that I do indeed view Quilled games with great trepidation, as most of them are unimaginative and offer the player nothing new. I think that if a small outfit is really serious about releasing commercially viable Quilled products, then they should offer something a little different by way of storyline, plot or playability to compensate for the necessarily stereotyped appearance of these games. As for the game you mention I either haven't been sent it, or I have put it to one side during a particularly busy month. I can only reiterate my advice given in the March introduction to The Trail which pointed out that games often won't load no matter how many cassette recorders are brought to bear on the problem and any software house puzzled by the long wait for a review would do well to submit another copy. It might be worth stating here that the number of cassettes arriving in any one month far outweighs the number reviewed, and hence I rarely return to 'old games' for material. So, where a game of reasonable quality has been sent in for review (with adequate background of the company, the game, and interesting snippets of information), it may well be a good idea to resubmit.

DB



THANATOS

In this magical game you take control of a dragon, Thanatos the destroyer, whose eternal destiny lies in conflict with the forces of the underworld. The dragon which is very large and superbly animated, flies, walks, swims, and burns its way through the landscape. The game features fantastic landscapes with a totally new panoramic scrolling action.

"Wow! This game is really amazing, stunning, astounding, brilliant! The tune on the title screen is very nice, but the graphics are absolutely superb." CRASH, December 1986 (overall rating 93%)

£9.95 Spectrum cassette
£9.95 Amstrad cassette, £11.95 Amstrad disk (£9.95 by mail order)
£7.95 Commodore 64 cassette, £9.95 Commodore 64 disk





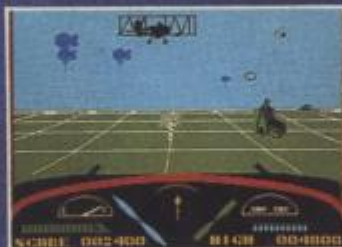


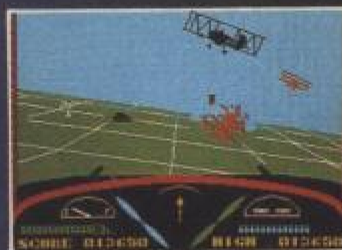
DEEP STRIKE

At last an opportunity to try your luck against the Red Baron and his flying circus of World War I flying aces. This game not only lets you take-off in a fully armed fighter, but also gives you control of the four bombers of your DEEP STRIKE attack force. It uses the latest techniques to bring you a smooth-scrolling and tilting 3D landscape viewed from the cockpit in full colour.

"...after a few games I really got into it. The way you can bomb the ground features (especially churches) makes the game much more enjoyable than if you just had to shoot planes!Overall a game that you should come back to quite a lot in the future." AMTIX, February 1987 (overall rating 71%)

£9.95 Spectrum cassette
£9.95 Amstrad cassette, £11.95 Amstrad disk (£9.95 by mail order)
£7.95 Commodore 64 cassette, £9.95 Commodore 64 disk







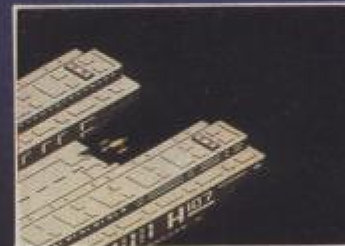
SIGMA SEVEN

An all-action arcade game featuring imaginative state-of-the-art 3D graphics and exciting synthesised sound. There are seven increasingly more difficult stages to the game which starts-out easy but ends-up almost impossible. Each stage is split into three phases : first take a space-fighter and blast your way to the next station through swarm-mine defences, then free that station's internal pathways of killer-robots and radioactive deposits, to finally reach the remote-controlled main panel which must be reset within a critical few seconds.

"I really like this – it has three neat mini-games all of which are very playable and addictiveThe graphics are really crisp and clear with a beautiful starry backdrop..." ZZAPP, February 1987 (overall rating 70%)

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"Playability and addictiveness are of the highest standard, but as for the graphics – well, what can I say? As far as animation and solid 3D goes, this is probably the best I have ever seen" CRASH, November 1986 (overall rating 95%)

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SABOTEUR II – Avenging Angel

A follow-up by the original author, where as the Ninja's beautiful sister, your mission is to revenge your fatally wounded brother. The rebels have found that the disk he stole in "SABOTEUR" also contains data for one of the dictator's missile silos. Your job is to fly in by hang-glider, fight your way through the security guards, pumas, dogs and radio-controlled robots, to seek out some top secret punched tape to activate the missile's launch control. Launch it, disable the electric perimeter fence, then break-out by motor-bike. Over five hundred locations, three buildings, underground caverns, intelligent guard dogs and stupid guards.

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BIG 4

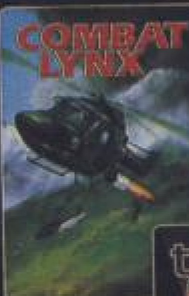
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"Unlike most compilations where one title carries the others, the BIG 4 are actually four big games...A collection worth collecting." C & VG, December 1987

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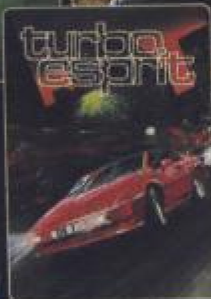
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Lloyd Mangram

PLAYING TIPS



'Good Grief!' I hear you crying, 'who's that at the top of the page?'.

Yep, you got it. There's been changes at the Towers yet again. It was a bit unforseen, but the CRASH Girlie Tipster, Hannah Smith has left us and gone to Pastures New (it's a place near Birmingham I'm told). In lieu of creating another Playing Tips star (in the mould of Robin Candy or Hannah the Ravenflame Slayer) for the time being, the Newsfield Management (blessèd be their names) has asked me to step into my old role and 'do the tips'.

Well, for those who go back to before Issue 10, you'll know how long it is since I did the job. But, as they say, the old ones are often the best. And I'll do my best. So, here we go.

STARGLIDER 128 TIPS

No POKEs yet for one of CRASH's highest rated games. In the meantime you can make do with some helpful hints from Mr 'Missile Launched!' himself, Dominic (the only way is to win) Craig from Guildford in Surrey.

How to destroy Starglider One

At the game's start there's a piece of spinning cheese – this is a silo. Dock with it. If this is the first time you've docked, interrogate the computer. Once you know which machines are which, take to the air. If Starglider One isn't waiting for you then to pass the time attack any Egron machine in the area apart from walkers, stompers or powerlines. Once Starglider One attacks, level altitude and charge after him to get him in your sights. As soon as he's in the middle of the cursor, let rip with a missile.

It may take some practice but you'll get the knack eventually. When he begins to flash different colours fire at him again and watch that birdy explode.

How to dock with silos

Silos are yellow, spinning triangles. To dock, close in on one and level off close to the ground. When you're presented with the lined, flat-side, charge forward. If the positioning is correct the tractor beams should draw you in. To double check that you've docked you should be presented a list of options like hacking the computer.

How to complete missions on level one

After destroying Starglider One you're told to dock with with a silo and receive a mission briefing. There are two missions; finding and collecting a rear view scanner or an energy pod – it's best to write down the co-ordinates as they are given. As soon as you launch decelerate, turning to face the appropriate compass direction. Accelerate, but when the flashing pod under a bridge (or a white object above a bridge) appears, slow down lots and move towards it gently – and Hey Presto!

How to re-energise

If you're having trouble with the energy then:

(a) Destroy Starglider One and get the pod mission.

(b) Use energy towers

To use the towers first shoot the yellow cap from the top of the main tower, then destroy all the Ergon forces in the area. Now come parallel with the twin towers, getting as close to the ground as possible, and position the main tower in your sights. Position yourself dead centre in front of the towers and accelerate through them. If this achieved successfully, the border flashes red and a message should read 'Energy Cells Refueling'.

Thanks Dominic. Now, anyone got tips for level two..?

FOOTBALLER OF THE YEAR

'Ere we go, 'ere we go, 'ere we go' as they say. Only they'd go a lot further if they had Philip Norton from Skelmersdale in Lancashire to give them the following tips to score more goals.

When the goal is in view, move the ball towards the penalty spot then, still moving the ball, press fire to kick it just as it reaches the spot. It should then shoot into one of the corners depending on the way in which it's kicked. The goalie can't reach it, so you should always score. C'mon you reds . . .

JUDGE DREDD INFINITE LIVES

There comes a time when even super heroes need more lives than us mere mortals – enter The Haxby Hackers. This time Melbourne House's *Judge Dredd* comes under the hammer with infinite lives POKEs from the lads. The routine prevents the Mega City from being taken over..

```
10 REM JUDGE DREDD
11 REM HAXBY HACKERS
12 REM CRASH April 87
20 CLEAR 24700
30 LOAD "" SCREEN$
40 LOAD "" CODE
50 POKE 24963,24
60 RANDOMIZE 24736
```

And Paul Eynstone from Abingdon has discovered a rather helpful bug . . . If you're sick of a baddie shooting at you and generally making life a misery, try standing on the far right of the screen and wait. The baddie attempts to jump up and freezes, which should allow you to shoot away quite happily. This only works on screens with more than one platform.

If a baddie joins you on the same level, jump down one, still staying on the far right of the screen, and he will jump down. All you need to do is to jump back up again.

GAUNTLET HEALTH HACK

I've been inundated with the 'when you Press Symbol shift you can walk through walls' tip for *Gauntlet*, so no more please! However, this is the first poke routine I've received, it's for infinite health and comes courtesy of Antony Shipley from Kettering in Northamptonshire. It's one of those hacks that joyously removes all reason from the game – no need any longer for that silly dying all over the shop - just trundle through all the levels collecting, marauding, stealing, eating, massacring, blasting, shooting, zapping . . .

```
10 REM GAUNTLET HEALTH
11 REM by ANTONY SHIPLEY
12 REM CRASH April 87
20 CLEAR 28999: LET TOT = 0
30 FOR A = 29000 TO 29014
40 READ D: LET TOT = TOT + D:POKE A,D
50 NEXT A: IF TOT <> 1601 THEN PRINT AT 10,10;
"ERROR IN DATA":STOP
60 DATA
62,255,17,81,1,221,33,0,128,55,205,86,5,251,201
70 CLS: PRINT AT 10,10;"START TAPE"
90 RANDOMIZE USR 29000: RANDOMIZE USR
29000
100 IF PEEK 32814 = 16 THE LET A1 = 82: LET
A2 = 184
110 IF PEEK 32814 = 232 THEN LET A1 = 104: LET
A2 = 189
120 POKE 32793,38: POKE 32794,128
130 POKE 32863,241: POKE 32864,255
140 LET A = 33047
150 READ D: IF D = 9999 THEN RANDOMIZE USR
32791
160 POKE A,D: LET A = A + 1: GO TO 150
170 DATA 62,201,50,A1,A2,195,0,132,9999
```

DRUID

Where there's a POKE there's a Phil . . . or so the saying goes. This month's collection of Churchyard hacks begins with a poke, several in fact, to provide troubled Druids with infinite everything. Type it in, run it and play the *Druid* cassette from the beginning.

```
10 REM DRUID POKES
12 REM by PHIL CHURCHYARD
13 REM CRASH April 87
20 CLEAR 26800
30 LET = 0: LET WEIGHT = 0
40 RESTORE
50 FOR I = 30000 TO 30079
60 READ A: LET TOT = TOT + WEIGHT * A
70 POKE I,A: LET WEIGHT = WEIGHT + 1
80 NEXT I
90 IF TOT <> 288948 THEN PRINT "ERROR IN DATA!!!": BEEP 1,0:STOP
100 BORDER 0: PAPER 0: INK 0: CLS
110 POKE 30057,50: REM INFINITE MOST THINGS
120 POKE 30062,50: POKE 30066,50: POKE 30069,50: POKE 30072,50: REM INFINITE ENERGY
130 PRINT AT 21,8; INK 7;"START DRUID TAPE"
140 LOAD""
150 CLS
160 RANDOMIZE USR 30000
1000 DATA 33, 57, 117, 34, 63
1001 DATA 205, 195, 0, 205, 205
1002 DATA 83, 206, 122, 254, 46
1003 DATA 192, 33, 83, 206, 34
1004 DATA 63, 205, 62, 195, 50
1005 DATA 58, 105, 33, 82, 117
1006 DATA 34, 59, 105, 201, 50
1007 DATA 107,92, 33, 103, 117
1008 DATA 17, 0, 105, 1, 50
1009 DATA 0, 237, 83, 138, 105
1010 DATA 237, 176, 195, 61, 105
1011 DATA 62, 201, 58, 24, 133
1012 DATA 62, 24, 58, 85, 111
1013 DATA 175, 58, 87, 117, 58
1014 DATA 94, 122, 58, 40, 128
1015 DATA 195, 0, 112, 0, 0
```





KAT TRAP INFINITE MT-Eds!

It had to happen – the conclusion to Genesis Birth Of A Game Competition – the Kat Trap hack. Courtesy of Jon North, it provides MT-Ed with infinite lives and infinite weapons so the Kat Men and their accomplices can be defeated with little effort. However, the The Alps may still prove to be a problem . . .

```
10 REM KAT TRAP
11 REM by JON NORTH
12 REM CRASH April 87
20 FOR F=3e4 TO 30016: READ A:POKE F,A:NEXT F
30 RANDOMIZE USR 3e4
40 DATA 205, 86, 5, 221, 33, 215, 253, 17, 0, 1, 62, 255, 55, 205, 86, 5,201
50 POKE 65136,220:POKE 65137,255
60 FOR F=65500 TO 65507:READ A:POKE F,A:NEXT F
70 RANDOMIZE USR 65024
80 DATA 62, 45, 50, 63, 121, 195, 0, 108
```

W·A·N·T·E·D·!

Win an entire issue of Smashes!
You take a gamble on our reviewers and their opinions and win an entire issue of Smashes IF you're the first picked out of the mail bag with a sensible and working POKEs for the following:

- **infinite lives;** *Head Over Heels*
- **infinite balls;** *Arkanoid*
- **infinite lives;** *I, Ball*
- **anything;** *Rana Rama*
- **a BIG selection; any old games**

or with maps for *Head Over Heels* **and** *Rana Rama.*



TEMPEST

Electric Dream's conversion of the smash hit arcade game (which has consumed many of my hard-earned 10 pence coins recently) has attracted a lot of attention, judging by the numbers of tips and pokes flowing from the mail bag. G Patterson from Billingdon was first out of the bag and so receives the credit for his infinite lives hack. The X in line 50 dictates the number of lives possible – any number that doesn't exceed 255.

```
5 REM TEMPEST
6 REM G PATTERSON
7 REM CRASH April 87
10 BORDER 0:PAPER 0: INK 0: CLS
20 LOAD "" CODE
30 POKE 57544,205:POKE 57545,163:POKE 57546,225
40 FOR N = 57763 TO 57763 TO 57770:READ A:POKE N,A:NEXT N:RANDOMIZE USR 57344
50 DATA 62,X,50,182,130,195,0,188
```

128K ZUB TREAT

Oh, it's that zubbing game again. Well, did you zub that Zub has an extra game included on it? It has! No zubbing around here, a free game – called *Lightfarce* supposedly written by Fast As You Like. We've got the delectable and totally zubbable Alison Beazly **down at Zubertronic to thank for this one. However, it only works on the 128K or Plus 2**

What you do is start the game, and press 2, 4, 6, 8 keys all at once. A Cheat message then flashes across the screen and by pressing 1, 3, 5, 7 at once *Lightfarce* starts up – complete with redefine keys option, joystick selections, highscore table and a whole host of extras.

NOSFERATU HACK

Piranha's snappy 3D arcade adventure was duly awarded a CRASH Smash in the Christmas Special. However, if you're still struggling with the irritating rats, spiders and dogs that patrol the castle and town then fear no more; G Patterson **(a rodent catcher if ever I've seen one) has a couple of helpful POKEs which rid every location of their formidable foes and give an infinite time limit to boot. What more could you ask for?**

```
5 REM NOSFERATU
6 REM G PATTERSON
7 REM CRASH April 87
10 FOR F=30000 TO 30016:
READ A: POKE F,A: NEXT F
20 RANDOMIZE USR 30000
30 DATA
205,86,5,221,33,215,253,17,189,
0,62,255,55,205,86,5,201
40 POKE 65137,255
50 FOR F=65137 TO 1e9: READ A
60 IF A=999 THEN RANDOMIZE
USR 65024
70 POKE F,A: NEXT F
80 DATA 175,50,196,132
90 DATA 175,50,196,132
100 DATA 62,201,50,111,155
110 DATA 195,0,118,999
```

MORE ACADEMY TIPS

Last month the lipstick-clad one printed some tips on the first level of CRL's follow up to *Tau Ceti, Academy*. Now, like the sequel to a great film, I present (cue music) Academy Tips II – The Wrath of Russell. Well, Russell Mulcahy **from Sheffield supplied these for levels two and three, so read carefully and take note. I was hoping to print some POKEs to go alongside the tips but they didn't work. Ho hum.**

Level Two – Cipher

Design a Skimmer with a door unit and missiles. Follow one set of lighthouses until you see the reactors, which are easier viewed on the scanner. Approach slowly, shooting anything that attempts to blast you, but take care not to hit the reactor or it won't allow you to enter. Dock with the reactors and get the codes.

Return to the GVL, blasting the lighthouses as you go so you know you've been that way. Re-equip and repeat the procedure for the other reactors. Once all codes have been extracted, return to the GVL and go into the codes system. To begin with it's best to try and match one piece of code with every other piece until a match is found. The codes look like two numbers when completed.

At the OK Coral

Lots of missiles and good shields are required for this. The missiles are for the armoured crawlers which are invulnerable to lasers. Generally, suing scanners, you should seek out groups of robots and approach them slowly. As they attack, zap them, don't use the missiles.

Hide and Seek

Delay bombs are needed, but missiles, AAMs or good lasers are not essential. However, it's wise to keep a hold on some good shields. The suppressor droid is moved by shooting at it – but they're difficult to control. Move one over to a group of solar discs; close enough so you can get enter the group without being shot. Position yourself so all discs are visible on the central blue square of the scanner.

Turn round and fire at the suppressor, as you don't want to destroy it with discs. Keep firing until the discs return your fire, then drop the delay bomb and escape by flying towards the suppressor – but don't crash into it. If this is done correctly the bomb should destroy all the discs but not the suppressor. Remember – you only have two suppressors so don't waste them.

Level Three – Laserium

Dead easy! Design a Battle Skimmer with good lasers, shields, missiles, scanner, furry dice . . . No, cut the furry dice. Don't charge around the landscape, take it easy, returning to the GVL if you're damaged. Don't launch too many missiles at once, as this increases the chances of a robot AMM launch. You should have no trouble in getting 100% on this one.

Hades II

Use the Battle Skimmer from Laserium, but add a jump unit if it hasn't already got one. Be careful not to destroy th jump pads.

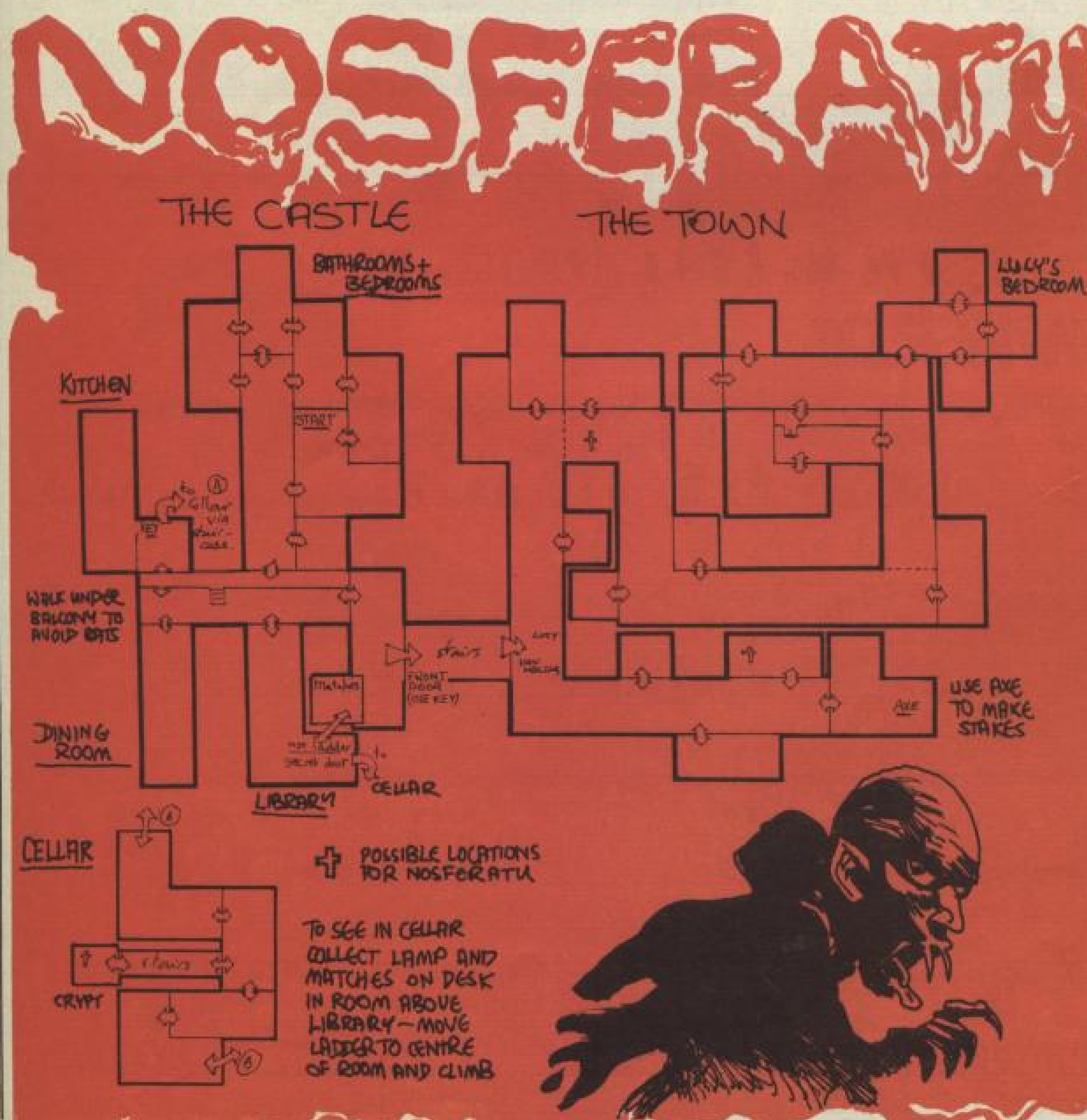
Sands Of Time

To destroy the reactors use delay bombs or fire a missile at very close range. Watch out for solar discs protecting one reactor as there are no suppressors. In this mission there's no real point carrying on after 60 percent, as the other missions should build up your score.

Mission Improbable

Similar to Cipher only with jump pads. A suppressor is required to use the first jump pad, as it's surrounded by solar discs. Apart from that it's quite easy.

Academy Tips III – The Search for Russell follows next month with hints on how to complete the missions in levels four and five.



DOUBLE TAKE

DOUBLE TAKE TIPS

The game has different starting positions for the objects so not all will have to be swapped. The objects should be put in the same room in the other universe. The room numbers are on the map but they can be identified as in Universe 1 locations are the inverse of the locations in Suminks Universe. 6% is awarded for every pair of objects swapped. Some screens can only be entered through Portals in the tunnel.

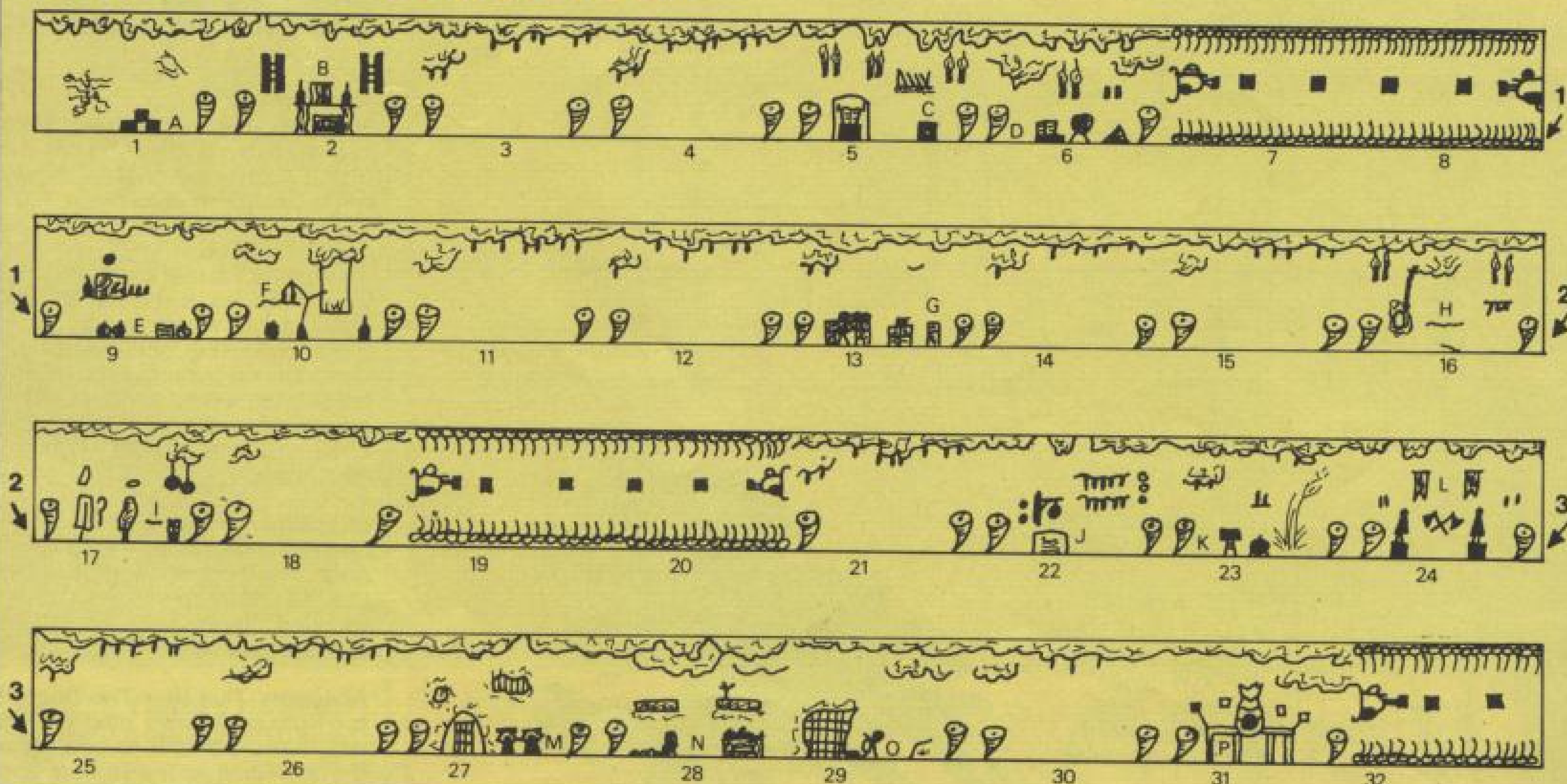
KEY

A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P

UNIVERSE 1.

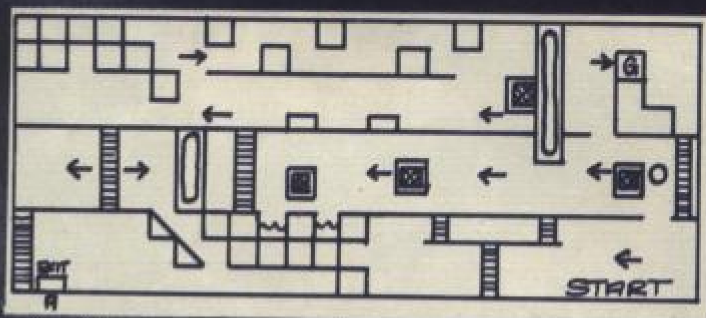


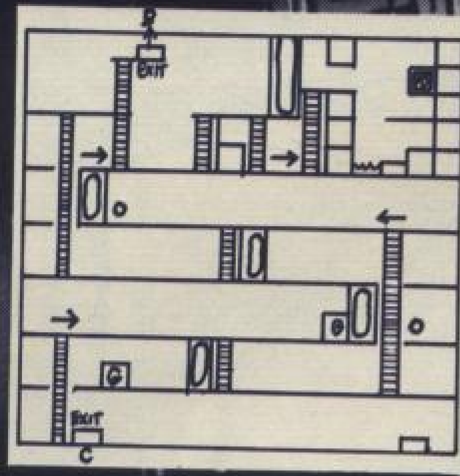
SUMINK'S UNIVERSE

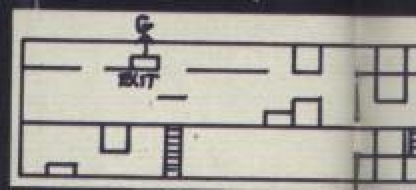


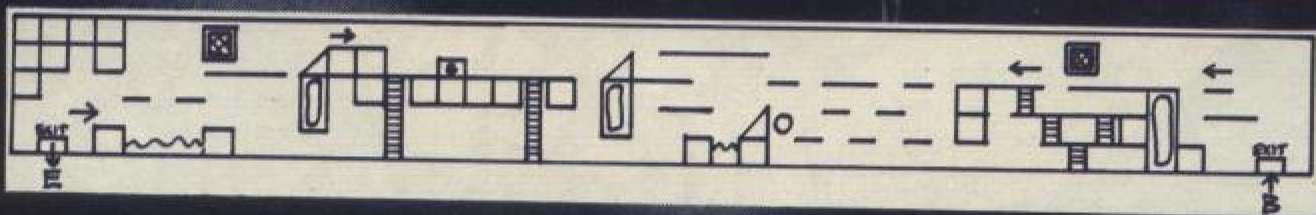
FUTURE KNIGHT

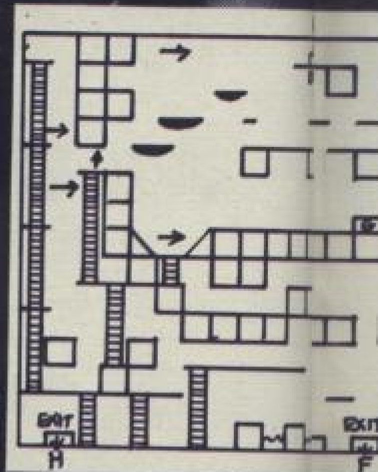
THE MAP_PART ONE
-THE SPACESHIP-

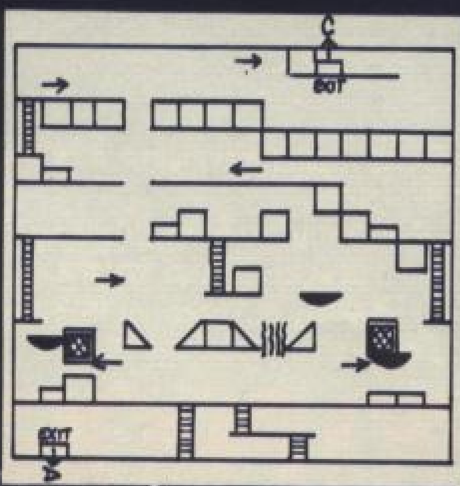


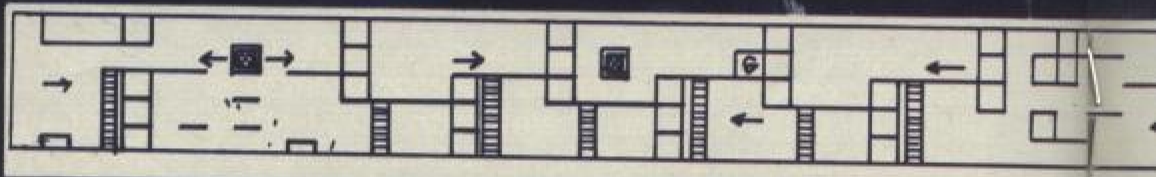


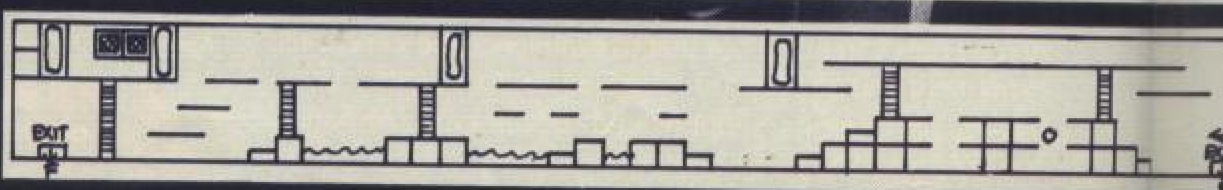


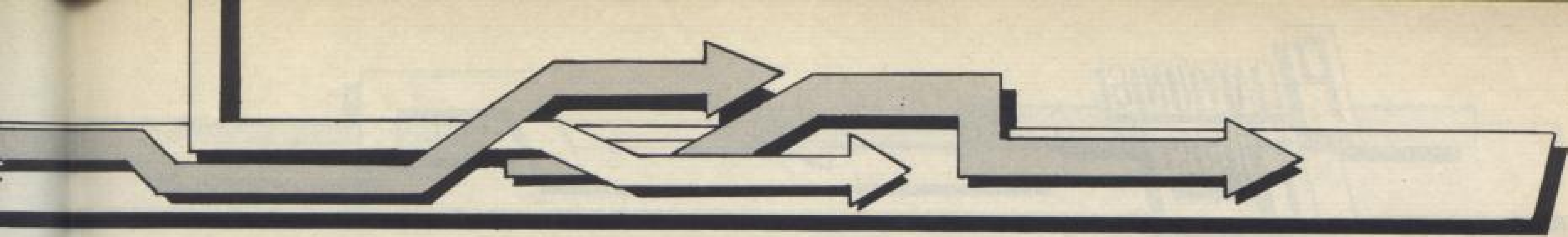




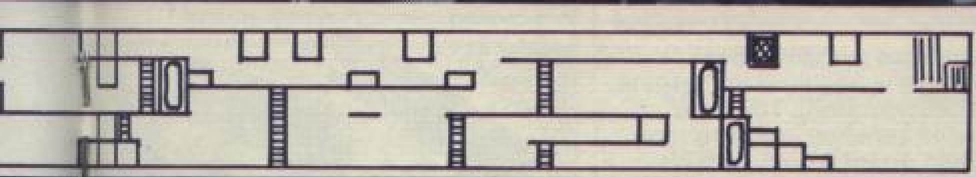


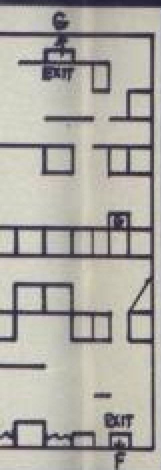


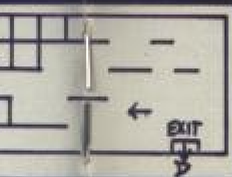


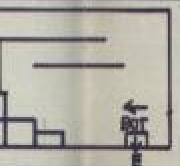


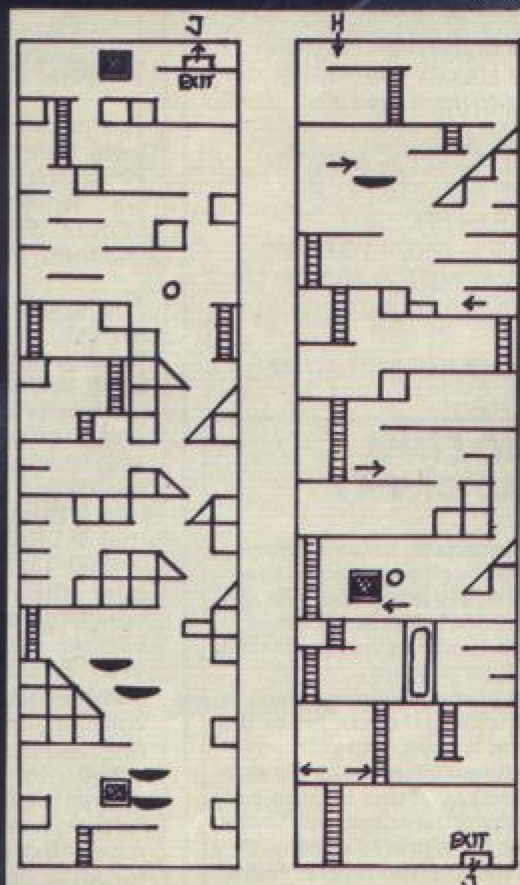












FUTURE KNIGHT

Adam Thompson **from Hollinswood in Shropshire sent a pleading letter to print his** *Future Knight* **solution. Well Adam, today, these are your tips! They're for the first part, to go with the map. If anyone has a map of the second section I can print the rest of his tips when it arrives . . .**

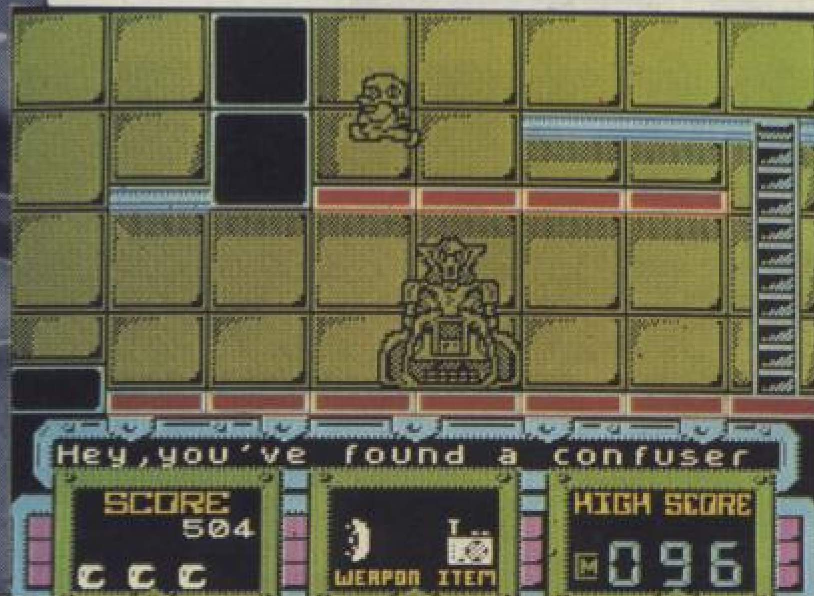
First you need the Safe Pass. go left, then up, left again, then right and grab the Safe Pass. Go back right. Go down, kill the Large Robot and go through the exit. Now you have to locate the Securo-Key, the Platform Key and the Exit Pass. Go left, then through the second opening on the right. Kill the Robot and go up, left, up and through the exit. Go left through four rooms, and through a secret door on the left. Go through two more rooms to the left, and through the exit.

Go right through five rooms, get the Securo-Key, leaving the Safe Pass behind. Retrace your steps to the exit and go through. Go left, then down through three rooms and you should be presented with the message; 'This exit is locked, fool'! Use the Securo-Key and go back to get the Safe Pass, then back through the exit. Go right, get the Platform Key, go back left, and through the exit opened with the Securo-Key.

Go down six rooms and through the exit. Go down a further six rooms and use the Platform Key – a Platform should appear. Go down, get the Exit Pass, then retrace your steps to the exit. Go through and up six rooms to the exit.

Go through, go right, and through the exit. Go clean through six rooms and another exit. Go down, right, down, kill the Large Robot, go left, and through the exit. Go left, right, down two rooms, left and walk into the exit – but remember to use the Exit pass. Walk out of the exit, then back in, and you should be on the planet's surface.

More solution next month.



DIZZY DICE TIPS

Clive Martin **from Oadby near Leicester reveals tips on the budget fruit-machine game. But does anyone have a POKE for getting lots of money to come pouring out of the Spectrum?**

Never hold any fruit unless there are two or more of a kind. On gamble mode try and and stop it on the right melon. When playing the dice game, collect your winnings if you achieve three or four, as it's very difficult to predict what happens next.

FIST II SOLUTION

If there was ever a Ninja then it's Gary Bowyer **from Sawston in Cambridge who completed the not-so-hot beat 'em up on his second go. And here's the route he took . . .**

(R)ight, (L)eft, (U)p, (D)own, (W)orship for energy

R, D, R, U, L, W, R, U, R, U, R, U, R, D, R, D, L, W, R, D, L, D, L, U, D, R, D, R, D, R, U, R, D, R, D, L, W, R, KILL!

Ah so.

ZUB: A QUICKIE

Ray Goodall **– a right little zub from Brasted zubbed in a prolific zub which ensures that Zub has no zub enemies to zub you to death. Simply zub the tape into the zubcorder MERGE in the BASIC loader and include the following POKE just before the Randomize Zub statement . . .**

POKE 37473,201

EIDOLON PROTECTION RACKET

And it's Phil **to the rescue yet again, this time with POKEs to ensure your Eidolon craft becomes invulnerable to fireballs and the hideous creatures lurking within the caverns. And, a neat touch this, it also ensures no energy is lost when you unleash the Eidolon's fire power. Slap the** *Eidolon* **tape in the deck, rewind it, run the program and hey presto! I hope . . .**

```
10 REM EIDOLON POKES
11 REM by PHIL CHURCHYARD
12 REM CRASH April 87
20 CLEAR 65360
30 RESTORE
40 LET TOT = 0; LET WEIGHT = 1
50 FOR I = 65361 TO 65480
60 READ A: LET TOT = TOT + WEIGHT * A: LET
WEIGHT = WEIGHT + 1
70 POKE I,A
80 NEXT I
90 IF TOT <> 665353 THEN PRINT "ERROR IN
DATA!!!": BEEP 1,0: STOP
100 POKE 65434,34: REM NO HARM FROM FIRE-
BALLS
110 POKE 65439,50: REM NO ENERGY LOSS FROM
FIRING
120 POKE 65449,50: REM NO HARM FROM CREATURES
130 PRINT AT 21,7;"START EIDOLON TAPE"
140 RANDOMIZE USR 65361
1000 DATA 205,175,255,205,175
1001 DATA 255,42,75,92,17
1002 DATA 26,3,167,237,82
1003 DATA 54,225,35,54,15
1004 DATA 35,54,157,201,33
1005 DATA 237,75,34,49,252
1006 DATA 62,74,50,51,252
1007 DATA 33,3,252,17,0
1008 DATA 128,1,232,3,237
1009 DATA 176,33,0,128,34
1010 DATA 56,252,33,142,255
1011 DATA 34,126,252,195,49
1012 DATA 252,33,151,255,34
1013 DATA 7,255,195,147,254
1014 DATA 33,0,24,34,101
1015 DATA 161,62,201,50,21
1016 DATA 141,62,78,58,40
1017 DATA 157,62,17,58,239
1018 DATA 161,195,0,109,221
1019 DATA 33,0,91,17,17
1020 DATA 0,175,55,205,86
1021 DATA 5,221,33,0,91
1022 DATA 42,83,92,195,115
1023 DATA 8,0,0,0,0
```

UNIVERSAL HERO

So, you're still not a Universal Hero, eh? Never fear, David Metcalf **from Tyne-and-Wear has worked out the following solution enabling you to launch the fighter. Take it away Dave . . .**

First find the Remote Switch, (located next to the Mineral Truck), and take it to the Floppy Disk inside the Force Field. Put the cursor on the switch and use it to open the Force Field – take the Floppy Disk.

Take the Tap (on the moon's surface) to the furthest screen on the right. Use the tap with the Piece Of Tubing sticking out from the cliff face. This stops the Fountain found later in the game. Collect the Plunger, the Stick Of Dynamite and the Wire, found next to the Space Ship. Take them to the screen where all the rocks are piled up against the door, move the cursor to the plunger and use it. The door is now accessible.

Locate the Three-Pin Plug, the ID Card and the Floppy Disk. Go through the door in the room which had been covered with rocks, move the cursor onto the Plug and use it, then use the Floppy Disk to read the Computer Display. Type in 'Slartibardfast' and the Force Door should be open.

Go through the door next to the Pineapple, fetch the Oil from the room and take it to the room where the fountain was. Two screens further on there is a Red Machine. Take the Rocket Fuel to the Ship, making sure you have the ID Card, and using the Rocket Fuel, the ship should launch itself at the freighter ready for your next challenge.

AGENT X

Ahhh, a nice simple POKE for a change – just like the old days. All that needs doing, according to Andrew McGough **from Hensingham in Cumbria, is to MERGE the loader, edit line 10, and insert POKE 26817,201 before the RANDOMIZE USR 25000 statement. And when the game loads you're blessed with infinite lives. Great, huh?**

XEVIOUS

Blast, blast, neeeeowww, boom! A good ol' shoot 'em up and POKEs go together like Roger (slave driver) Kean and brackets. Mark Gavillet from Hartlepool in Cleveland has come up with the goods for US Gold's post-Christmas release. First type in Skunk's loader, as printed in the February issue on page 63, and add the following line of data.

```
100 DATA 186, 64, 83, 1, 14, 0,
184, 195, 254, 103, 221, 221, 32,
179, 62, 97, 111, 6, 65, 16039
```

ELEVATOR ACTION

There's no stopping those Hackers from Haxby **(and not forgetting Pocklington). This time they've come up with a routine to help Agent Otto defeat his adversaries in Quicksilva's Taito coin-op conversion,** *Elevator Action.* **Type it in, check it (thoroughly, mind you), run it and load the game and hero Otto suddenly becomes immortal.**

```
10 REM ELEVATOR ACTION
20 REM HAXBY HACKERS
25 REM CRASH April 87
30 CLEAR 65535
40 LOAD "" CODE 64752,0
50 POKE 64752,0
60 POKE 64753,254
70 FOR F = 65024 TO 65030:
READ A: POKE F,A: NEXT F
80 DATA 175, 50, 101, 164, 195,
35, 148
90 RANDOMIZE USR 64730
```

SHAO LIN'S ROAD CHEAT

The mysterious Lecky **of Runcorn has been pressing all manner of keys to find a cheat mode in The Edge's Konami conversion. He finally came up with this little piece of yoga . . .**

First press the Space Key. While holding it down press the V, C and X keys, and with any spare fingers left press the cursor right key. If this is done correctly the different screen levels change from one to another. When the desired level is found remove your fingers and play!

BAZOOKA BILL

Bazooka Bill is a right wimp, he can't even avoid 10,000 marauding enemies without losing a life. If you're suffering from this sort of hassle then why not take a tip out of Alan Madge**'s and** David Moore**'s respective books? They're from Torpoint.**

The action is played on three levels, indicated as T (top), M (middle) and B (Bottom). Follow the directions whilst constantly running right, and you should have the game finished in no time. However, there are no tips for the third level, ariel flight, as the route changes every time.

The City:
M, M, M, M, M, B, M, B, M, B
The Airbase: B, B, M
Leyte Island: M, B, T, B, M, M, B

GENERAL TIPS

Play with a friend who keeps his finger on the C key. When you lose a life, the game restarts but you have no points.

On the Island the Bazooka's are hidden in the waterfalls and can not be taken, so dodge the tanks or they run you over.

In the inventory the weapons, in order, are fists, knives, machine gun, flame thrower, bazooka.



FEUD SOLUTION

The Mega Team, **who are a pretty loyal bunch, have revealed the** *Feud* **Solution for those of you who would rather not use the POKEs. But it's very tempting to use them both . . .**

The spells needed are freeze, fireball, heal and zombie. When the ingredients are collected go back to your cauldron and mix the spells by selecting the correct page on the scroll and pressing space. After mixing the four spells find a villager and follow him everywhere making sure that the scroll is set to freeze.

Wait until Leanoric appears near the villager and press space to freeze him then turn the villager into a zombie. In which ever direction you move the zombie follow but try to keep the zombie on top of Leanoric to reduce his energy. Now set the scroll to fireball to blast Leanoric and reduce his energy further. If he isn't killed first time repeat the procedure and don't forget to use the heal spell if any of your energy is lost.

THE OOOPS SORRY DEPT

As Darren Martin **and** Kevin Gale **noticed a small mistake in the Christmas Special playing tips. Line four in the** *Universal Hero* **POKEs should have read:**

```
4 LET CH = 1: LET TOT = 0: FOR
C = 32768 TO 32809: READ A:
LET TOT =TOT + A * CH: LET
CH = CH + 1: POKE C,A:NEXT C
```

And The Skunk **pointed out that in the February issue there was a mistake in the data for the** *Fairlight* **POKEs. In line 100, 221 should have read 220.**

Okay, all sorted out now. I stand corrected (even though the mistakes weren't mine in the first place, but there's Lloyd magnaminity for you).

JAILBREAK INFINITE LIVES

The Haxby Hackers **are back in force with infinite lives for Konami's recent conversion** *Jailbreak*. **It won't stop you snuffing it along the way but it does enable you to be reincarnated umpteen million times – which is, sort of, infinite.**

```
10 REM JAILBREAK
20 REM HAXBY HACKERS
25 REM CRASH April 87
30 LOAD "" CODE
40 FOR F=29755 TO 29763
50 READ A: POKE F,A: NEXT F
60 RANDOMIZE USR 29696
70 DATA 62, 201, 50, 129, 198, 42,
240, 255, 233
```

MARBLE MADNESS

The Cairnpoke Connection, **which consists of** Mark Cairns **and** David Topping, **have discovered a quick, but very useful, POKE for** *Marble Madness Construction Set* **giving infinite time on every course. Just MERGE the loader and list line 40. Type POKE 38579,0 before the RANDOMIZE USR statement.**

HE-MAN HACK

Face up to it, *He-Man* **is a bit of a wimp unlike** The Haxby Hackers **who sussed a routine to provide the muscle-bound one with an infinite body-shield and endless Moon Time. And when the pokes are in and running simply follow the complete solution which they were dashed decent enough to enclose – but you'll have to wait for next month for that . . .**

```
5 REM HEMAN
6 REM HAXBY HACKERS
7 REM CRASH April 87
10 CLEAR 24099
20 LOAD "" SCREEN$
30 LOAD "" CODE
40 POKE 24576,0
50 POKE 24580,0
60 POKE 24581,0
70 RANDOMIZE USR 24100
```

SUPER SOCCER CHEAT

Just to round off the trio of footy games is a quickie from Greg Lovett **from Norwich in Norfolk on Imagine's** *Super Soccer*.

If, as the players are running onto the pitch, you press the keys T, G and H simultaneously, the game begins on the next period. If this is repeated four times, the Penalty Shoot Out begins – it's much easier to win here.

So now you know . . .

HANDBALL MARADONNA CODES

Lee Dorey and Fred Betterworth **from Fareham in Hants have been busy with Grand Slam's footy game – up until two o'clock in the morning so they claim. Anyway, use the initials NN and when the prompt 'Do you want to put in upgraded codes in?' appears type in 'Yes'. Apparently it gets harder every time, but that's the way it goes.**

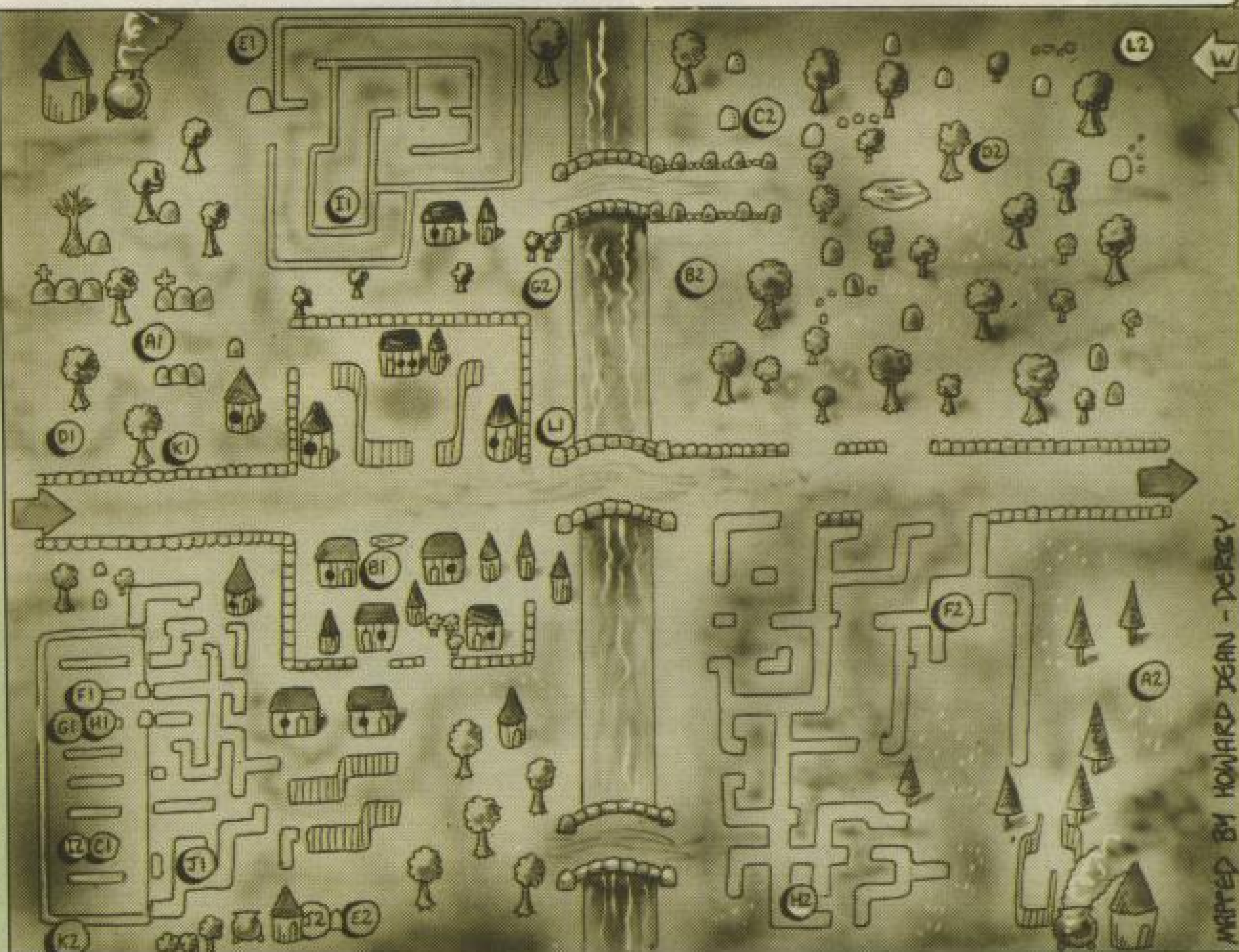
B 3848	G 8645	L 2547
C 1858	H 8645	M 4257
D 2841	I 5655	N 6243
E 6146	J 3542	O 7253
F 7156	K 1552	P 8744

TERRA COGNITA INFINITE LIVES

It would appear that the 100 screens of scrolling arcade action in this game has bamboozled a few readers. G Patterson **dons his Superhack cape again and flies in with a simple four line POKE routine to provide infinite lives for bewildered Mining Engineers.**

```
10 REM TERRA COGNITA
11 REM G PATTERSON
12 REM CRASH April 87
20 LOAD "" CODE 16384: LOAD
"" CODE
30 POKE 50615,0: POKE 50616,0:
POKE 44486,0: POKE 45004,0
40 RANDOMIZE USR 30000
```





= Teleport C = Sprites E = Swift G = Doppleganger I = Reverse K = Fireball
= Burdock C1 = Snapdragon E1 = Mad Sage G1 = Fox Glove I1 = Skullcap K1 = Dragonsteeth
A2 = Dandylion C2 = Toadflax E2 = Speedwell G2 = Catsear I2 = Thistle K2 = Mousetail
B = Protect D = Zombie F = Freeze H = Invisible J = Heal L = Lightning
B1 = Ragwort D1 = Bones F1 = Bind Weed H1 = Chondrilla J1 = Feverfew L1 = Knap Weed
B2 = Piperwort D2 = Devilsbit F2 = Bog Weed H2 = Hemlock J2 = Balm L2 = Cud Weed

FEUD HACK

Who needs the solution when the Phantom Hacker has produced a series of POKEs which makes most of the gameplay redundant? Type them in, run the program, play the *Feud* **tape and away you go . . .**

```
1 REM FEUD POKES
10 CLEAR 24716:LOAD ""
CODE
20 REM INVULNERABILITY
25 POKE 47190,201
30 REM START WITH ALL
SPELLS
35 POKE 44186,0:POKE49043,7
40 REM SPELLS NEVER RUN
OUT
45 POKE 49210,201
50 RANDOMIZE USR 41653
```

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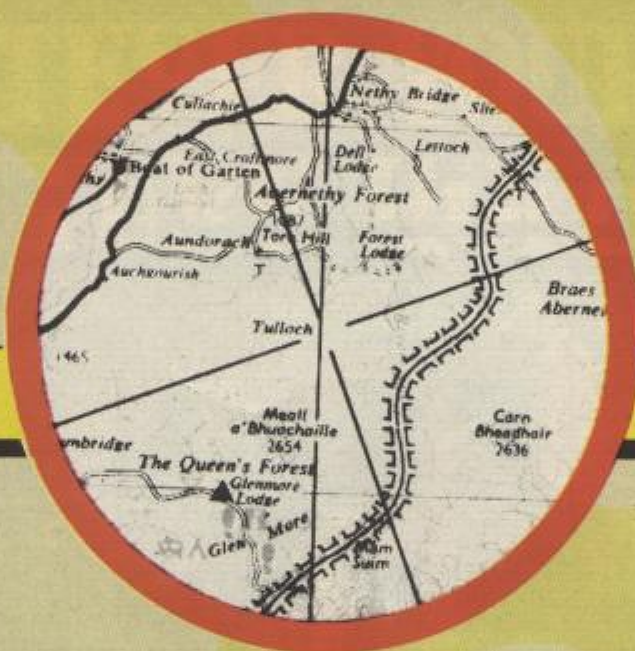


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FRONTLINE



with Philippa Irving



PLAYING THE ROLE

It's drawing near to the end of what we call Hilary Term here in Oxford. Soon the students will be cycling off home to their country estates and the Japanese Tourist Season will be declared officially open. I won't be returning to my native land north of the border this vacation; I'm staying amongst the dreaming spires to do battle, partly with the Germans (there are a lot of Germans this month – as ever) and partly with revision for my Finals. And not forgetting the Japanese tourists.

For me, the end of term means the end of roleplaying. Could your Spectrum play the part of an absent human opponent as convincingly in this type of game as it can for a cardboard-counter wargame? There have been a number of attempts in the not too distant past to produce what the designers optimistically describe, and the buyers and critics surprisingly seem to accept, as computer role playing games. The Spectrum, without the advantages of a disk facility, has not been treated to too many of these. But still, there have been attempts – most notably PSS's *Swords and Sorcery* – and although some have met with moderate critical enthusiasm, all have failed to work as games. At the least, game players who buy them are aware of an extreme falling-short of the experience of 'real' roleplaying.

The reason for this is fundamental. A board wargame is ideal for translation to the computer medium. Its game mechanics rely heavily on arithmetical calculations and the manipulation of numbers in a tightly-defined, self-enclosed, unvarying and predictable environment. However complex a wargame is, it can be reduced to figures in the abstract, and implemented on a board with cardboard counters in the actual. All that can go into a computer and onto a computer screen.

A roleplaying game may be based on numbers in part and on text in part, but it's played in the air between the game master and the players; word, imagination, flexibility and above all, interaction are important. RPGs are closely related to the kind of 'let's pretend' games that children play, or to put it in a more sophisticated context, to improvised drama. The rules of a RPG make the difference and give the game structure and purpose; and yet despite the size and apparent complexity of roleplaying rulebooks, anyone who has actually played knows that the practice, if not the theory, is extremely simple.

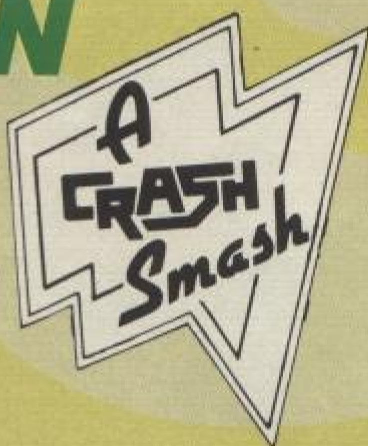
This is human simplicity, which can in no way be simulated by a computer – yet. *Swords and Sorcery*, and the more sophisticated versions of the same sort of thing available for the Commodore, resemble if anything a very bad early *Dungeons and Dragons* scenario: a random network of badly-decorated rooms with a different monster bedsitting in each, there to be clobbered and burgled, and a quest of no inherent interest. A computer can certainly keep count of gold pieces, experience and hit points, but it can never do more than imitate these mechanical aspects which are the least important part of roleplaying.

That is not to say that a computer cannot, in a different way, provide atmosphere and interaction. Computer adventure games work, as everyone knows. The only time I have really felt in the presence of a computer-generated personality was while playing INFOCOM's *Deadline*. Adventure games have nothing to do with RPGs of course, even though I feel a lot of people intuitively feel that they *are* closely related. They're a computer-defined genre, working within the limitations and using them. All successful computer games do that.

I've got a tutorial in three-quarters of an hour, so it's time to start reading for the essay. Next month I'll be talking about the definition of a strategy game.

VULCAN

Producer: CCS
Retail Price: **£9.95**
Author: **R T Smith**



There are a lot of readers of FRONTLINE who will need no introduction to the name of RT Smith. He has become one of the few strategy game writers to carry the burden of a reputation, something which I think has worked against game designers in other computer genres. One admired release creates an expectation of something the same only better next time, and if it is different because the author is trying to experiment, the reception can be puzzlement and disappointment.

Vulcan: The Tunisian Campaign is not different. In presentation and game mechanics, it follows quite unashamedly in the tradition of *Arnhem* and *Desert Rats*. The format is identical and the system has been refined, rather than changed in any significant way. In his previous two releases, RT Smith developed a 'look' for a computer wargame which is extremely viable and, as he's proving, pretty extendable. Some quibbles I had with the system as used in *Desert Rats* have been cured, most satisfyingly; it's now possible, for instance, to survey all your own units, including those stacked together, before giving orders to any of them.

To those familiar with *Desert Rats* that is all the technical introduction this wargame needs, but for the uninitiated, *Vulcan* is based firmly on the board games that some of us love. Units are represented by cardboard counters – electronically coded – and orders are given to each by means of a menu of options, whether to move, assault, hold, 'travel' or fortify. A report can easily be called up for each unit, detailing factors such as strength, supply and attack modifier. When units from each side come into contact, combat automatically occurs. After all the orders have been given by the player, movement on both sides is carried out simultaneously by the computer.

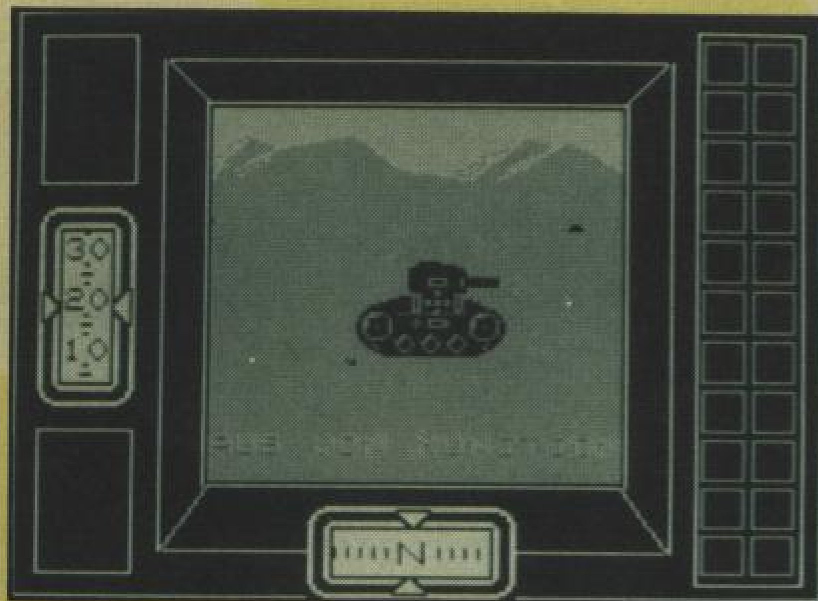


To these basics, air attacks and hidden movement have been added. Air attacks are not always possible, and the choice of using any air strength for reconnaisance instead is available. If the player is too far away from a friendly airfield, the squadron has a good chance of being shot down. Hidden movement is infuriating, but adds greatly to the atmosphere of con-

fusion and tension. When playing against the computer, you are simply unable to see the computer's 'counters' until one of yours makes contact with it. This option can be turned off in the two-player version. Fortunately, intelligence is limited on both sides; the computer opponent cannot see your counters either, or so the author claims . . .

The Tunisian Campaign itself is not, as the author admits, one of the best-known of World War II; but as the final objective of the grand-scale scenario makes clear, the ultimate goal is control of Bizerta and Tunis. French Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia belonged to France and fell with her occupation in 1940. The campaign by the Allies to regain the territory began in 1942 and succeeded in 1943. This entire historical campaign can be played through, given a spare fortnight, in the obligatory 'big scenario' lasting 183 turns from 12 November 1942 to 13 May 1943. The playing time of *The Tunisian Campaign* is estimated at 8-16 hours! Alternatively, the game is divided into four shorter scenarios, from 12 to 23 turns. A save game option is provided, of necessity. In the 128K version the entire game is present in memory; 48K owners have to reload data for each scenario when starting a new game.

Five nations take part, and are distinguished by colour. There are ten different type of unit, each with individually-described capabilities and strengths and weaknesses. The brigades and divisions are actually named in play, and correspond to historical forces. The supply rules for brigades, divisions and battalions differ, something which I found mildly confusing; particularly so because supply, as in *Desert Rats*, plays a vital role in attack and defence. Supply is a portable commodity which is used up continually, but at different



rates depending on the activity pursued by the unit. Supplies can be replenished by HQ units, which themselves must be near a road with a clear path back to a friendly source. A unit attacking without supplies is at a disadvantage, as, naturally, cutting off an enemy supply source is a very good tactic.

The map is extremely big, far larger than the map of *Desert Rats*, and has a crisp functional, attractive appearance. There are 11 terrain symbols listed in the manual, all reasonably clear on the screen, though on my black and white monitor (which is all I can afford on my £1.99 a year grant) I had difficulty in distinguishing between 'rough' and 'mountain'. This is important because the manual explains at some length that choice of terrain for the battle can have a significant effect on the outcome. I found it difficult to decide exactly which 'square' individual units where on, anyway. Because the counters are large and the terrain detailed, this is a perpetual problem.

Combat is hair-raising because of the aural representation of the duration and strength of damage inflicted, one familiar, no doubt, to players of *Desert Rats*. The 128K version sounds chillingly realistic as machine guns rattle and bombs drop somewhere with a whine. Defeated units retreat automatically, but combat is quite often not conclusive in a single round; the damage done, to your own side at least, can be checked in the next round.

The 128K version – which is, incidentally, provided on the reverse side of the same tape as the 48K – includes options to vary the historical situation in each scenario, effectively giving an advantage to one side or the other. The 48K version doesn't have any skill levels, but this is probably one of the few games which can stand that. It means there's no easy way in.

The accompanying booklet is as substantial and excellent as its predecessors. The playing sequence is methodically laid out and arranged under subtitles for ease of reference, terrain and unit symbols are illustrated – I wish other writers would realise what a help this is when their idea of a light tank looks like a misshapen fried egg – and the historical background to each scenario is described extensively, with photographs and diagrams to go with it. There's a print-out of the map in the centre pages, which is helpful when only a small portion of it can be on the screen at one time. This is the kind of documentation which inspires rather than merely tells how to play the game, and I wish more game designers would emulate it.

The same can be said of *Vulcan* itself. This is Spectrum wargaming at its very best; complex in operation, wide in scope, and easy to use There's hours of play in it and I would regard it as an essential purchase for every wargamer

PRESENTATION 90%
Smooth and uninterrupted

RULES 94%
Voluminous historical information, immaculately presented

PLAYABILITY 89%
Admirably simple for such a complex game, but sometimes confusing

AUTHENTICITY 92%
The amount of detail provided before a single shot is fired builds up the atmosphere

OPPONENT 85%
Vicious, but disconcertingly invisible for most of the time!

VALUE FOR MONEY 94%
Weeks of play

GRAPHICS 89%
Clear, uncluttered and pleasant

OVERALL 94%
The state of the art in Spectrum wargaming.

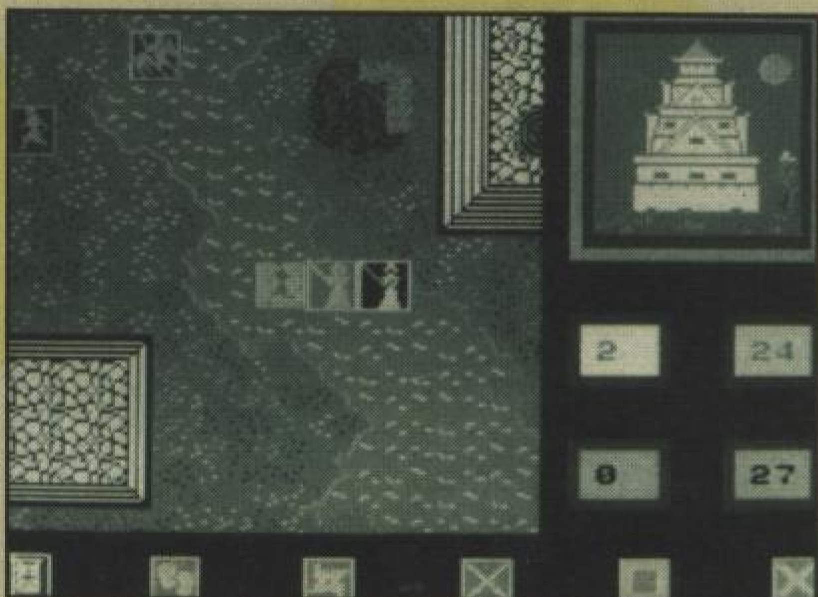
SAMURAI

Producer: CRL
Retail Price: **£9.95**
Author: **Colin Ajayi-Obe**

A friend once advised me that one of the essential methods of judging the value of a board wargame is to weigh the box. Although this criteria is slightly dubious, it's one that sticks in the mind, and I admit that I can be found in a games shop with the English Civil War in one hand and the War of the Roses in the other, trying to decide which is heavier. Something of the same idea can be applied to the initial impression which a computer game makes on me – I like to see a nice fat rulebook. *Samurai*'s rules have difficulty in covering the back of the inlay; and although short and simple rules need not necessarily mean a short and simple game – just as a heavy card map can make an uninspiring board game overweight – it does seem to be a bad sign.

Samurai is, behind the minimalist introductory material and underneath the cosmetic oriental colouring, a strategy game of the very simplest kind. The rules are concise because there are genuinely very few of them – I'm sure that the rules of draughts or even chess could probably be fitted into a reverse inlay.

At the start of the game the player is asked to purchase fighting units from a coffer of 200 (Japanese yen, perhaps? The monetary unit isn't specified), and from a selection of four different types of warrior. These types are explained in the rules. There are



Samurai, high-quality general-purpose fighters, Ashigaru, who are probably peasant-bread cannon-fodder wielding pole-arms, the famous Ninja, and the expensive but extremely effective Mounted Samurai.

Having selected units via icons on the first screen up to the limit of your financial resources, your units are automatically positioned on the main playing area. There are three 'incidents', which start your forces and the computer's in different positions. It is not made entirely clear in the rules where the battle is supposed to be taking place, but by the look of the reasonably attractive scrolling map, and reading between the lines of the brief bit of scene-setting about Shinto, Imperialism and Buddhism, I assume it is supposed to be an imperial temple under attack from warriors of the Buddhist faith. Not ashamed to admit my ignorance of all Japanese history, I am annoyed to realise that I'm none the wiser for playing *Samurai*. It's impossible to work out from what is said in the rules whether or not the player is supposed to be on the side of the Emperor. The fact that the

Samurai monks, which belong to the computer's forces, are described as 'the top warriors of Imperial Japan', leads me to suspect that the player's side is anti-establishment. But why precisely they are fighting the Emperor is left entirely to the player's imagination.

Irritating as this is, it does not affect the gameplay at all. The player's forces are the light-coloured squares and the computer's forces are the dark-coloured squares (I tested this game in black and white, not being able to afford a colour monitor on my £1.99 a year grant), and the aim is to eliminate all the computer's forces from the mildly decorative landscape – this abstract aim is unatmospheric but entirely satisfactory.

The computer, although it appears to play by the same rules, does not have quite the same forces. It has three different types – Monks, Samurai Monks and Young Samurai Monks – and does not have fancy troops like the Ninja and cavalry at its disposal. It doesn't need them, because even at the first difficult level the computer has considerably more units than the player.

Each unit has a fixed number of movement rates per turn, which are displayed and counted off as the moves are taken. Some parts of the terrain, such as rivers and steps, take two movements points to traverse. Also there are obstacles, pillars and walls for instance, which block the path entirely. The Mounted Samurai have by far the most movement points and the second-class Ashigaru usually the least, though there appears to be a slight random element in the number assigned to each individual unit. When a unit comes into contact with the enemy, combat is inevitable; a unit cannot be moved away once it has come into direct contact.

When all units have been moved, combat is resolved in two rounds with the player always getting first hit. Your hit points and the enemies are displayed side-by-side, and damage is immediately deducted. It is in the combat stage where the type of fighting unit really makes the difference. A Mounted Samurai can do a massive amount of damage at one stroke, and a pole-waving peasant has difficulty in denting the opponent. It is hinted in the rules that the best way to win a fight is to outnumber the opposition, and this is certainly true. Each unit gets one attack only, and if single units are in combat both are bound-to-base contact with a counter of the computer's side, one unit effectively gets a free hit.

Therefore a major part of the game's strategy is in manoeuvring things so that you have a greater chance than the computer of getting more than one unit into contact with one of the opposite side. This is difficult because the computer always seems to have the advantage of numbers, and it provides a challenge which eventually becomes frustrating time after time I gathered different combinations of units and tried out my developing theories, and every time I was overwhelmed by the computer's numerical advantage.

The presentation is simple and fast-moving. The computer automatically highlights each unit in turn, and the player gives orders via icons. For most units the options are limited to movement, but there is an interesting addition in the case of Ninja; before moving, the Ninja can attempt to throw a 'shuriken' at an enemy unit, forfeiting some of his move points to do so. The player judges the angle. It is entirely possible to hit a friendly unit, or a pillar! Icons are provided to quit the game, and to move onto the next combat phase. There are also two other items which do nothing whatsoever and cannot be accessed. The rules say they are there for 'safety reasons', but do not elaborate. I have absolutely failed to work out the function of the safety icons and am tempted to ask for suggestions on a postcard . . .

The computer opponent is reasonably adept at positioning itself advantageously for combat, but its movement routine is atrocious. Samurai monks bounce off pillars bewildered, and wade cheerfully through movement-point gobbling rivers – colliding with each other without apologising. It's true that this lack of intelligence can sometimes make things easier for the player, but it's not very satisfactory to have to rely on the stupidity of the opponent to win a game.

Samurai is basically a very simple, abstract strategy game – fun to play, easy to get started on, and sufficiently smooth to be playable. However, I really feel that it doesn't have enough content or atmosphere – particularly for a full-price game

PRESENTATION 80%
Pleasantly smooth, with those trendy little things called icons.

RULES 90%
Concise and uninformative.

PLAYABILITY 75%
Very easy to get into, and nicely paced.

AUTHENTICITY 40%
Cosmetic . . . but perhaps, given the game, unimportant.

OPPONENT 49%
Watch the highly-trained Samurai Monks throw themselves at pillars . . .

VALUE FOR MONEY 60%
Overpriced for content.

GRAPHICS 81%
Clear, uncluttered and reasonably attractive.

OVERALL 69%
A simple, playable strategy game in Oriental fancy dress.



My heartfelt appeal for more mail has only just hit the streets at the time of writing, so I hope to see a dramatic improvement in the volume of my correspondence very soon. Or perhaps no-one will want to write to someone who looks like that picture makes me look! I'm reasonably pleased to have received a letter from a fellow female, though don't get me wrong; people who know me agree I'm only mildly sexist, and not a total misanthrope (LMLWD). Correspondence is welcomed from beings of all sexes.

Dear Philippa,
CRASH readers seem to be unanimous on the excellence of GAMES WORKSHOP's fantasy wargame *Chaos*, and perhaps the game is beginning to receive the widespread circulation that it deserves. Anyone with a copy may be interested in the following listing. It allows some of the characteristics of the creature in *Chaos* to be changed. After breaking into the *Chaos* code (this can be done when the screen with 'The Winner is' appears and the program is waiting for a key to be pressed) then load in this editor program.

```
10 PAPER 0: INK 7: BORDER 0:
OVER 0: CLS: POKE
23607,60:POKE 23606,0
20 PRINT "CREATE
CHAOS""""EDITOR BY A
BAILEY"
900 DIM A$(7,20): RESTORE 900:
FOR A=1 TO 7: READ A$(A): NEXT
A
910 DATA "COM-
BAT","RANGED COM-
BAT","RANGE:","DE-
FENCE","MOVEMENT ALLOW-
ANCE","MANOEUVRE RAT-
ING","MAGIC RESISTANCE"
950 INPUT "WHAT MONSTER (1-
40)""OR 0 TO EXIT";N: IF N=0
THEN STOP
960 LET A=58429+N*38-(2 AND
N>17)-(N=18)-(3 AND N>21)-(3
AND N>22)-(3 AND N>25)-(3
AND N>27)-(3 AND N>37)-(3
AND N>39)
970 IF N>40 THEN GO TO 950
1000 CLS
1010 FOR B=A TO A+: PRINT
PAPER 2; CHR$ PEEK B
1020 FOR C=1 TO 7: PRINT AT C*
2+2,0;C; PAPER 1;A$(C); PAPER
3;" ";PEEK (A+12+C)
1030 NEXT C: PRINT "0 TO
SELECT ANOTHER MONSTER"
1040 INPUT "OPTION? ";D:IF
D=0 THEN GO TO 950
1050 IF D<1 OR D>7 THEN GO
TO 1040
1060 INPUT "VALUE? 0-255 ";V:
POKE A+12+D,V:GO TO 1020
```

To use the editor, type RUN (enter).

Selecting á monster number from 0 to 40 prints up the monster's name and present characteristics. Typing a number from one to seven then allows you to enter a new value for the corresponding characteristics. Although *Chaos* only uses values up to nine, any value up to 255 can be used, although it will be displayed as a letter when the game is played. For example, you can give a creature a very powerful ranged weapon by entering 50 for its range and ranged combat values, or give a fantastic speed by entering 20 for movement allowance.

When you have finished changing that monster's values enter 0 to select a new monster. Some monsters will be unaffected by changing characteristics, for example Wall and Gooey Blob.

After changing all the values you want, enter 0 to stop editor. Then type RANDOMISE USR 32000 to start playing.

Although giving silly values is fun for a while, the editor can be used to design sensibly balanced monsters for serious play; for example a monster that cannot move and is weak, but has a powerful short-range weapon, or a monster that is very weak in its

defence (that is, it can be killed in one shot) but is fast and can kill most other creatures in one attack (attack 50). If you want to save a set of designed creatures to tape, use SAVE 'creatures' CODE 58429,2000.

Percentage chance of spell-casting is unaltered, so if you want to be sure of casting your new creature then make it a Giant Rat or a Bat, etc.

Enjoy creating chaos!

Anthony Bailey, Carshalton.

I print this listing entirely on faith, for as I had to admit last month, I've never seen a copy of Chaos! But for this impressive bit of hacking into a game which I'm sure is going to haunt my ignorance forever, Anthony wins this month's £20.00 of software.

PI

Dear Philippa,

Welcome to FRONTLINE! It's good to see another woman on the CRASH staff and in the wargaming section too. The bastions are falling by the hour. At least you won't be remarking that the women should be 'keeping the home fires burning' as your illustrious predecessor did . . . I hope. Anyway, down to the serious points this letter has to make.

1) Fantasy wargaming. I can't see why this excellent combination has been overlooked (practically) so far. In the December Issue there was a reasonable example of this – *Sword so Bane*. At the moment strategy has a minority market, and by adding a touch of fantasy more people from the adventure market may be tempted to buy. This in turn leads to more games being written and more strategy players found, and causes a mushrooming circle that can only be of benefit to all concerned. I don't advocate changing wargames into adventure or vice versa, but I think that balrogs and elves add that little touch and excite the imagination. The supreme example of this type of game is *Lords of Midnight* – an incredible work of art. I actually bought my Spectrum to get my hands on a copy and was not disappointed. In fact I run out of superlatives to describe it.

2) Role-playing games. As both Valkyrie and Commander-in-Chief I'm quite impartial. I think the answer is really simple – wargaming is a part of RPGing but only a part. Strategy is more important, but then I think strategy is quite separate from wargaming. You can't really quite equate *Connect Four* with *Arnhem* or *Gallipoli* with *Runequest* when there is so much more to an RPG – religions and mythology for starters. Yes there are overlapping areas, but the two are distinct.

3) 128K. The area of wargaming is one which could really be dramatically improved by a greater memory. In *Doomdark's Revenge* there were 48,000 screens and the large playing area was generally praised. Imagine if there had been 128,000 on the 128 version! CCS is gradually making use of the bigger memory with games like *Gallipoli* and think this should be encouraged. We could be seeing a whole 'new generation' of games, with more complex rules, larger playing areas, better graphics and faster response time – even opponents with artificial intelligence (said she, drooling). 128 owners are starved of original software and would rush out to buy it. So come on software houses! It would be well worth your while.

I hope you'll excuse me as I must get back to battling with the Iceguard. Good luck with FRONTLINE and may all enemies fall beneath your banner.

Louise Bagshawe, Wadhurst

Many thanks for your good wishes, Louise! In my opinion the difference between wargaming on the computer and RPGs is fundamental, but I'll be holding forth on that next month. I wish there could have been a 128-enhanced version of both games I had for review this month, but as with arcade games, the 128 owner wishes that some piece of software could be conceived with the potentialities of the 128 in view from the start. Though the idea of Doomdark's Revenge with 128,000 screens is terrifying! The beauty and the owner of Mike Singleton's classics are enhanced by the fact that they fit into 48K, miraculously.

PI

Dear Philippa,

I have always been interested in joining the ever growing band of strategy/wargame players, but each time I've bought a game of this type I have been more than disappointed with what I got for my money.

Have things on the wargaming front really changed from a few coloured squares stuck on a very crude map, both totally obliterated by grid lines, with the instructions being 'if two opposing squares meet, the computer decides who wins and the loser's square is removed.'

While very basically a wargame is built on this foundation I think more complex games should be expected. I think a good idea would be if after a confrontation has occurred, a message appeared giving reasons for the outcome, for example 'While team A had superior numbers, the outcome was in B's favour due to greater artillery cover and controlling the natural vantage points of the hills'.

Graphics while not necessarily spectacular should be clear. The results system should be logical, not like *Stonkers* by IMAGINE.

You and others may say there are not a great number of strategy/wargames available and most of these are poor to terrible, so why not print a list of the ones YOU think are worth buying. This would save people buying one of the many poor games and being put off wargames totally.

S Jones, Chester-Le-Street.

I think it would be more fun to print a list of 'worst ever' strategy and wargames! My accolade for the Worst Game of All Time goes to The Great Space Race, but I'm sure there must be some delightfully naff wargames of the type S Jones describes that I haven't come across. Any suggestions?

PI

Happy Days are here again!

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Trivial Pursuit was programmed by Oxford Digital Enterprises.



DOMARK

TECH NICHE



As promised last month, Jon Bates wades through the music utilities and helpful hints. No April fooling here – it's all good sound stuff.

XRI's MIDI DATABASE

This is a surprisingly useful open-ended package from XRI. Used in conjunction with their *Micon Midi Interface*, it will receive and catalogue any midi information emanating from most midi instruments. If you have a midi-equipped keyboard like CHEETAH's *MK5*, you can record note-on/off and channel-changing information. However the *MK5* is but a mute controlling keyboard. The Database comes into its own when used in conjunction with self-contained synths. Nearly all synths can send out on what's called 'systems exclusive', with CASIO synths being the slight exception to this – they need a literal poke up the backside before they decide to enter this mode.

Systems exclusive is the part of midi protocol that has been reserved for the manufacturers' own special needs relevant to their product. For example: a synth in systems exclusive mode will dump, via midi, all the parameters that go to make up a particular sound ('patch' in synth-speak). With the database you can arrange these sounds into a file, usually consisting of about 250 or more sounds. As most synths cannot hold this many sounds, it's a very cost effective way of building a sound library without the expense of either a bespoke disk drive or a ROM cartridge.

Okay, I know that many synths *will* perform a direct cassette dump of sounds. But to rearrange the order of these is very time-consuming, and to see them displayed all at once is not possible. Once you start controlling your midi gear from another piece of equipment you need to rack up these sounds in a corresponding order.

Another valid reason for this piece of software is the lack of midi software for most synths. Apart from the popular synths like YAMAHA, ROLAND and CASIO, there's a large amount of nothing available. So KORG, AKAI, KAWAI and company don't get a look in. As I said before, whatever is churned out can be stored by the database. This can apply to drum machines, and even the portable keyboards that most schools seem to have. As long as the midi-equipped instrument can dump out information – usually on the exclusive part of its protocol – you're in business.

If you're not sure, consult the 'idiot guide' that came with the machine. If you're still confused, there are ways in which unwilling instruments can be coaxed into divulging their secrets – by inputting a data dump code . . . more of that later.

The program displays a main menu. The first thing is to enter the Set-Up page. This formats the database for your particular midi device. Try a few data dumps into the Spectrum and the set-up page starts telling you how many data bytes are in each dump. After a few goes the read-outs should be the same. The program has adjusted to your instrument, set itself up accordingly to read the header codes and corresponding data bytes, and is now mapped out into a file awaiting the datadumps. At this point you save the entire exclusively formatted program to tape. This is then the new program for whatever synth/drum machine/trouser press you have. You can do this again for each different type of dump/instrument.

Now the boring bit: the somewhat time consuming process of downloading each sound into its place in the file and giving it a name and category; for example 001 Trumpet – Brass, 002 Clarinet – Reed, 003 Storm – Effects, and so on. The database is preset into omni mode so it doesn't matter about what channel the instrument is receiving or transmitting on. Again consult your handbook as some synths need a 'systems info on' command input to them – usually done from the synth console itself.

Once you have few sounds stuffed into the Spectrum you can re-order them, delete or inset new sounds at any point, save or load new sounds. The database also has a string search routine, so if you can't remember the name or you want to search a particular category of sounds, then it's no problem. To send the sound to the synth just call it up either by name or number. It sends to the edit buffer of the synth and the sound name appears on the synth's LCD. You can still call up the internal voices from the synth or alternatively store the sound to the synth's own memory. To see how the data is sent you can opt for a screen print of the data code in decimal. You can now get clever and start to break the header code for your instrument – this will enable you to talk to the machine, and in some cases get them to dump all sorts of data. If it's any help, the decimal code header runs like this:

240 Enter Systems Exclusive mode: common to all makes.
067 Manufacturers ID code (in this case Yamaha)
00n Sub status: what type of instrument
00n Model of instrument
0nn Function: what the data dump is going to be for
There will then follow lots of data bytes ending with . . .
nnn Data byte count
247 End of exclusive mode

Unfortunately, manufacturers don't make the exclusive information widely available, but you can at least see the codes and play around with them accordingly. You would need to input them in a string from any interface program that enters Midi codes – most interfaces will do this happily. When reading off the codes from manufacturers' sheets be careful as they have a habit of changing from binary to decimal to hexadecimal without warning. As I said before, the midi interface on the single keyboards can often access individual voices, drums, as well as song data.

The database has a wide application especially if you're equipped with one of the less popular keyboards for which no software exists. School music departments could have a whale of a time with this as, at a very low cost, it's a customised midi storage device – comparing more favourably with midi data files costing £300 plus. It is also microdrive compatible. The only gripe I have is that in keeping with most XRI products, the instruction sheet seems to have been written in haste and has not been proof read. In some cases it contradicts itself and is a trifle perverse; for instance, informing you how to send sounds to the synth first when you have an empty database staring at you. It takes until the third page of A4 before we get onto loading sounds from the synth. Great program – rewrite the instructions.

I would be very interested to hear from readers who have come up with codes for systems exclusive. If there is a demand for some of the exclusive codes I may be able to help.

The Midi Database System is available from **XRI Systems** at: ***10 Sunnybank Road, Wylde Green, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands B73 5RE.*** **Tel: 021-382 6048.** Software costs £22.95 and the interface £49.95.

```
*XRI SYSTEMS SOUND DATABASE*
HELP PAGE - SYNTAX OF COMMANDS

006-send sound 006 to synth
D004-delete 004
E-exit to main menu
FPIANO-find PIANO
G08-goto and display page 8
H-display this help page
I010-insert a blank before 010
L004 FUNKY,PIANO-load sound 004
with name=FUNKY and type=PIANO
M012,004-move 012 to 004
N-display next page
P-display previous page
R145,PUNCHY,BRASS-rename 145
with name=PUNCHY and type=BRASS
S007,032-swap 007 with 032
 press any key to continue
```

```
***************************
** XRI SYSTEMS SOUND DATABASE **
***************************

1: ACCESS DATABASE
2: LOAD DATABASE
3: SAVE DATABASE
4: SETUP
5: PRINT SYS EX DATA
6: EXIT

press key 1-6 to select option
```

TECH TIPS



Letters

Having checked out the latest BETASOFT newsletter, Simon Goodwin catches up on his backlog of reader's letters.

BETA NEWS

BETASOFT have just published another 16 page newsletter for users of *Beta BASIC*. Techies will be particularly interested to see a full list of the add-on interpreter's system variables. This newsletter is always a good read If you've got *Beta BASIC*, and it also contains some interesting information about other subjects, HISOFT's *BASIC Compiler for example. ROM bugs, and even a section about national and international postal standards! This issue also explains how to convert programs into Tasword* files.

Best news of all is that BETASOFT have decided that it's worth supporting Spectrum Plus Two owners. I hope they are the first of many utility suppliers to think this way! However the planned 128K version of *Beta BASIC* will still only allow 22K of program, as on a normal Spectrum. *Beta BASIC* itself still soaks up 18K of the 40K free to BASIC on either model. But the 128 version will allow individual arrays of up to 64K to be held on RAM disk, rather than squashed in with the 22K of program, so *Beta BASIC* will take good advantage of the extra RAM on a 128 if you're using BASIC for data-processing.

BETASOFT's address is 92 Oxford Road, Mosely, Birmingham, B13 9SQ.

TECH TITBITS

128 BASIC BUG

Martin Bridges has found an interesting bug in 128 BASIC. Sometimes calculations are converted into 'tokens' and stored incorrectly. If he enters:

IF A > B – C THEN STOP

the line appears in the program as:

IF AB > – C THEN STOP

The exact variable names don't matter – in fact the bug crops up if you try to enter the *Pangolins* program in the Plus Two manual! The problem is not too serious once you know about it; Martin re-wrote his program to read:

IF B – C < A THEN STOP

The Plus Two swallowed that without a murmur! I 'phoned Amstrad and sprung this one on them, and they owned up promptly – apparently the problem occurs when there's a calculation at the right-hand side of a comparison, and the most general cure is to add brackets, like this:

IF A > (B – C) THEN STOP

The problem doesn't crop up in 48 BASIC.

SOUND ADVICE

Rick Cary is having some trouble with sound on the Spectrum Plus Two. Last month I printed some relevant advice about sound quality, but I didn't say anything about the levels of each channel. Rick says his sound chip seems to play at a lower volume than the BEEP facility, which incidentally is a left-over from the original Spectrum.

Amstrad have arranged that the BEEP volume (which cannot be altered) is the same as the maximum total volume available from the three sound-chip channels. It is almost certainly possible to reduce the BEEP volume by changing components on the circuit-board, but I'd advise against experimentation unless you know exactly what you're doing; much of the BEEP circuitry is also used to drive the cassette interface – and you should always avoid disturbing that!

Bear in mind that any reduction in BEEP volume will increase the effective level of background interference when you're using software limited to BEEP – such as titles intended for the 48K Spectrum.

RED GREEN BLUES

Neale Patton complains that his (original model) 128 will not work properly with a FERGUSON TX monitor. The normal eight colours work fine, but there's nowhere on the monitor to connect the BRIGHT output from the computer.

I'd better make one thing quite clear. THERE'S NO STANDARD FOR 'RGB' MONITORS! The only way to be sure that a certain brand of monitor will work with a specific type of computer is to try it. Also, it's not usually a good idea to trust retailers about this, although a minority do know what they're talking about. If you make it clear that you want a monitor that will work with a certain computer (or vice versa) you are entitled to a refund if you find that the hardware won't do the job – but you must say what you want before you agree to buy.

The old 128 and the Plus Two produce two different styles of TGB signal, although the documentation would have us believe otherwise. I'm grateful to **Chris Howland** for information about this, and the Plus Two buzzing problem I dealt with last month. Chris, you win £20 worth of Software – please write to Crash Mail Order to say what you want.

The old Spectrum 128 puts out three separate colour signals, to control the Red, Green and Blue (RGB) colour components of a picture. These three colours can be combined to form the eight Spectrum colours – White is all three together, Magenta is Red and Blue, Cyan is Green and Blue, and Yellow is made by combining Red and Green. Each colour is either 'on' or 'off' as far as the old 128 is concerned – a separate wire contains another 'on/off' signal that indicates that the intensity of all three colours should be increased; when this signal is 'on' the display is made 'BRIGHT'.

The snag is that few monitors expect this separate BRIGHT signal. Some monitors, often referred to as 'RGB TTL', have no facilities for external input of intensity information, so you're stuck with just eight colours, and there's nowhere to connect the BRIGHT signal.

Other types of monitor are called 'RGB Linear'. These allow continuous variation in the level of each component colour, rather than a simple choice of 'on' or 'off'. This doesn't help you if you're using an old 128, because there's no easy way of using the BRIGHT signal to turn the other outputs up or down. But the AMSTRAD version of the 128 – the Plus Two – contains just such a circuit. It has two different level settings for each of the RGB outputs. The lower setting corresponds to BRIGHT 0, and the higher one to BRIGHT 1.

These settings are arbitrarily chosen, like the difference between BRIGHT 0 and BRIGHT 1 on the UHF TV output, so the degree of difference between bright and normal colours will depend to a great extent upon your monitor. However, any RGB linear monitor should distinguish between BRIGHT 0 and 1, if you connect it to the three colour outputs of a PLus Two.

I regularly get letters asking if an RGB interface is available for the 48K Spectrum. The answer is yes, but it's not cheap: £36, or £38 with a 'through port'. You should check that your monitor is suitable before you order it. Write to ADAPT ELECTRONICS, of 20 Starling Close, Buckhurst Hill, Essex, IG9 5TN, or phone them on 01 504 2840.

You can avoid problems with BRIGHT, and other RGB quirks, if you use a monitor which expects 'composite video', rather than an RGB signal, as I explained in issue 28. All Spectrums produce a composite video signal internally – that's what gets fed into the modulator.

BONE OF CONTENTION

Tony Bullock has been experimenting with the Plus Two's paging mechanism, and asks why machine code in pages one and three runs slower than code in other pages.

The old Spectrum ran code slowly in the bottom 16K of memory, because the processor had to share access to the relevant RAM chip with the video circuitry, which constantly fetches information from addresses between 16384 and 23295 – the pixel and attribute area. Machine-code running in the bottom 16K, on any version of the Spectrum , stops and starts every few microseconds, at the whim of the Spectrum's ULA, so you can't use that memory for time-critical software, like sampling loops or sound-effect routines.

The memory in a 128 is split into two 64K chunks, in two groups of chips. One group is 'contended' – in other words, access can be interrupted by the video circuit – and the other is not, and runs at full speed. Note that memories can only communicate with one device at a time, so all four pages in the relevant 64K chips are unavailable while the video circuit is busy.

Sinclair's technical documentation doesn't seem to make sense in this area, and I haven't got a 128 to experiment with at the moment, but all the indications are that odd numbered pages are contended, and even numbered ones run at full speed.

LOOKING AHEAD

There doesn't seem to be much activity on the commercial Spectrum utility scene at the moment – Tech Niche is receiving very little new hardware and software for review. If you're a publisher or hardware producer let us know what's new. And I mean really new – we've had enough character redefiners and suchlike. Tell us and we'll tell the world. Write to: Tech Tips, P O Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1DB.

COLLECT £500 SPENDING MONEY

Crash Competition

Design An Original Computer Game for STREETWISE And You Could Win £500!

It's a hard life inside the Towers, sorting out all your competition entries, opening envelopes, judging comps and sending out prizes to people. I get really tired sometimes. Like now – I'm sitting in the broom cupboard, surrounded by piles of mail, absolutely exhausted. I need a holiday. Trouble is, I haven't got the money to jet off to somewhere sunny – by the time my meagre wage packet has been attacked by Mummy Minion who wants me to pay for my keep, I've barely enough money left over to pay for a large bag of Granny Grunge's famous Ludlow Pastilles to see me through the week. Saving up for a holiday is out of the question.

What I could do with is a nice little earner, like the one that a certain CRASH reader has come up with. Trouble is, I haven't got the imagination to follow in the footsteps – nay, strides of Jonathan Eggelton. Jonathan was the winner of the **GENESIS – Birth of a Game** competition run in conjunction with DOMARK many months back. Jonathan's winning entry for the GENESIS comp was *Kat Trap*, a game design that was programmed by DESIGN DESIGN and released by DOMARK on the Streetwise label. And very well it went too, making the talented youngster more than a few well-earned pounds. He's currently designing another game or two for DOMARK – and he's still at school!

It's all very Nice 'n' Simple if you've got an imagination – all you have to do is design an ORIGINAL computer game. It can be based on any subject – from sex to shopping to exploring the depths of uncharted seas . . . I shall say no more, lest I inspire too much . . .

You can go into as much detail as you feel necessary – but don't bother doing any programming – written (or drawn) designs are what we want to see. Entries must arrive at **IMAGINE THAT!, CRASH, PO BOX 10, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1DB** no later than 31 May 1987. The entry with the most potential – in the eyes of our expert panel of judges – earns the sender £500 in cash, PLUS all the fame and fortune associated with being a streetwise games designer. Oh, and by the way. Ten runners up will get a Streetwise game of their choice – and don't worry, if you don't win outright and Streetwise want to use your design for a game they'll respect your copyright and talk money . . .



TAMARA KNIGHT has arrived on the planet Astar, in order to wish her miniature neutron bomb adviser into a perfect lover. The trouble with wishing-planets is that they take everything so literally. I know, I am a bomb, and I have just struck us dumb, as well as causing Tamara to give birth to a pair of goats, I'll never say 'You're Kidding' again.

Why is it that whenever I find myself in dire straits, the only successful communication that I can achieve is with you, the reader of a prehistoric, non-electronic publication called ZZIT! or CRABS or some other such nonsense? I mean, what have you ever done for me? Yes – you! Can you transform me into a human being? Of course you can't! Can you endow me with a small moustache and some leisurewear? Not a chance! Can you conjure up our former travelling companions, Jimi Hendrix and Pinnochio? Not on your . . . just a moment . . . the door of the Macdonalds teleporter is swinging open, and out steps a long-nosed wooden puppet and a half-Cherokee former-guitarist from the Ike and Tina Turner Band. We are saved! And if it is anything to do with you, my splendid reader, I thank you from the bottom of my power-cell. Yes you.

Now I am not a vindictive bomb, for a bomb that is . . .

Our two travelling companions seem to find Tamara's sorry state highly amusing. Indeed, they are rolling about the surface of this planet, giggling and failing to control their mirth. This cannot be right! Aren't they supposed to be saving us? Now I am not a vindictive bomb, for a bomb that is, but I admit to you, gentle reader from my distant past, that I am a wee bit disappointed by their attitude. They might come to a sticky end for mocking my poor, mouthless, virgin-even-though-she's-delivered-a-brace-of-goats Tamara. Not to mention the birth mark on the back of her neck, which is my current disguise and location. I can't even turn myself into something more practical, because us Macdonalds neutron bombs are symbiotic, and if we can't communicate with our poor human hosts, we ain't worth spit.

They are trying to regain their composure, sucking down the last of their childish guffaws, sniffing back their snotty sniggers, Jimi wiping tear-crinkled eyes and Pinnochio wiping the sap from his knot-holes. I doubt if Pinnochio has got the sense to say the right thing and get us out of this mess, he's only got a wooden head, but at least Jimi Hendrix has a modicum of intelligence. After all, he was once a neutron bomb advisory unit like me, when he was disguised as Jimminy Cricket. Jimi wipes his eyes, and pulls himself upright, slapping Pinnochio on the back between bouts of laughter. He recovers himself enough to say, Son of a bitch . . . this is sick! and promptly turns into a wiry brown puppy, with shaggy hair and a Fender Stratocaster round its neck, curiously sniffing at a large hillock of vomit.

You know, I sincerely regret wishing him a sticky end, this planet seems able to misread my thoughts as well as literalise my words, and Jimi has turned his attention to Pinnochio's leg. I think he wants to make friends with it. Well I never! says the incredibly stupid puppet, and vanishes from the plot forever. The puppy wanders off wagging its curly little tail, towards a playful group of sodden cats and dogs, presumably conjured up by an idle comment about the weather.

That leaves Tamara and my silent self quite alone again, with nothing to do but relay our predicament to you. I mean, just how can we wish ourselves eternally happy, after I have rendered her speechless with a rather hasty You don't say , and then hushed my own mouth? Maybe we can communicate our wishes in letters of fire on tablets of stone, or plant them out in corn-seed and wait for Spring, or etch them in icy Morse-code on the arctic seas. On the other hand – is there a biro lying around somewhere?

All we have to do is to make a properly constructed wish on this planet, and all our dreams will come true. Is that too much to ask? Everything? Of course, I can't advise Tamara of any of this, deprived of my telepathic powers. I can't even tell her that I am programmed to explode by the end of the next page, if she does not fulfil todays's quota of Macdonalds Teleporter Booth sales. She is just sitting here, on this kettle of fish which appears to be some sort of fine, staring at the twin baby goats, who demand milk. I wish they would stop it, because every time they bleat what sounds like Baah! , a piece of soap, snatch of music or interior of a public house materialises.

Something catches her eye, over there behind that thrashing pile of suffering catfish. There, in the far distance, we can just make out the figure of some sort of mono-pedal humanoid, hopping awkwardly towards huge mounds of amputated feet. In the circumstances, I am not in the slightest bit surprised. Tamara 'shoos' the kids away, and wades through fish whose mouths are filled with unmelted butter. She waves her perfect hands, and snorting through her perfect nostrils, heads towards the receding back of the humanoid, but it does not see her. So off we go, heading for the foothills, carefully avoiding that disgusting horde of mickles doing something quite unforgiveable to a muckle.

Perhaps the one-legged pogo-humanoid can open his mouth without putting his foot in it.

Far be it from a cynic like myself to hint at optimism, but perhaps the one-legged pogo-humanoid can open his mouth without putting his foot in it. Perhaps he can bite his tongue, mince his words, help us. Perhaps not. The sun nudges the horizon, throwing long shadows across this insane landscape. A rat scampers by, demanding to be smelled. Some little cotton socks chase after it, demanding to be blessed. I begin to feel really sorry for your graphics artist as our pathway explodes, due to some wickedly mined Ps and Q. Towards the horizon, waves of Russian religious paintings wash the shore, as far as the icon sea. Wolves arrive at doors. Rainclouds change into teapots, never raining but pouring. The half-light of dusk obscures the hopping humanoid, but Tamara struggles on. She really is wonderful, up to her thighs in stinking wriggly toes, and she will not give up, the indelible in pursuit of the implausible.

I am glad to report that she avoids the man with the twelve inch pianist, and several other antique but cheap jokes. I know it's Episode Five already, but I'm wondering if it was such a good idea to exist in the present-continuous. I mean on the plus side it gives the impression of immediacy to, say, a reader of 20th Century Earth-type 'Zzits' or 'Crabs', but on the negative side of narrative prose, I haven't got time to think about the future before it's past. Bombs need sleep too. Bombs spend most of their life asleep. I once went to school with a nice little bomb called Alma Geddon, who slept underground for forty years without doing a stroke of work, and it wasn't the end of the world. Until she woke up, that is. It's hard to be a bomb sometimes. Tamara trips over the humanoid.

It writhes among the severed feet, trying to remove a fork from its vulgar trousers, and vowing never to use that particular Anglo-Saxon expletive again. I am dismayed to see that it is obviously male, and not only sports a small moustache but also writhes in leisurewear. He catches sight of Tamara, who is leaping up and down, pointing to the area of smooth skin where her mouth used to be. Hi there! says the humanoid, and immediately apologises as we shoot up into the air. Whoops, look, hang about . . . er, I mean, please can you help me? Tamara takes the noose from her neck, and chafes me severely in the process, then grabs hold of the thrusting fork, which instantly ceases motion. Oh thank you, thank you, young lady, I can't tell you how much I . . . No! cancel that one . . . an omnibus vanishes just before it reaches your stop somewhere in the galaxy, as usual. I'll be darned if I . . . Tamara grabs him by his single leg, and hauls him out of the path of a giant sewing machine which charges towards the horizon stitching everything in its monstrous path. The humanoid begins to cry. Tamara feels like crying too, but it's not the same without a mouth to pucker, so she cradles his head on her lap, as he sobs and moans, and sucks his thumb. Now he sucks her thumb. I must admit, between you and me and the other thousands of readers of the best-selling computer publication on your poxy planet, I feel somewhat jealous. I long for the time when I too can sob and moan and have my head cradled in her lap, but I am still a super-intelligent bomb disguised as a blemish on the back of the neck of the only perfect entity in the galaxy. Tamara bends to hear what this weedy uniped is mumbling, her long mane brushing his miserable face, and I catch some rambling story about him being a journalist working for the Dali Express, arrived on Astar in a Macdonalds Teleporter Booth. Unfortunately his first words on arrival were to do with his leg being pulled. Swearing did not help. He raises his head, extends a shaking hand towards Tamara's lovely gobless face, and says, This is all some horrible mistake. I'm just a newspaper man . . .

I am watching the look of blank amazement on his face, as the headline 'Gotcha!' is printed across his lifeless brow. The sheets of cheap newsprint flutter from her lap as my hostess leaps up, startled by the humanoid's transformation into crumpled origami, the thoughtless paper head remaining in her hand, its wordless paper mouth still encircling her thumb. Her eyes widen, her hands tremble, she touches me here



Part Five

By Mel Croucher

at the nape of her neck with her free hand, but I am helpless. I cannot advise her. I am not even sure that dreams should come true. Perhaps they are better left as dreams. In total frustration, Tamara Knight rips up the sheets of newsprint, a howl of despair muffled somewhere inside of her perfect throat. And then she pauses, an idea forming in her perfectly confused head.



The Whole of Page Three of the Dali Express consists of a snapshot of the planet Titsenbum.

The whole of Page Three of the Dali Express consists of a snapshot of the planet Titsenbum, with the headline 'Saucy Starbirds Say Castrate Rapists Now', but what's this on Page Four? There is a small item concerning the ancient religious martyr Saint Samantha. It seems that her bra-less blouse has appeared in a shimmering vision to some simple peasants in a grotto, and preached to them in fluent Iranian. The headline runs 'BLOUSE PREACHES SHI'ITE.'

Tamara totters to the safety of a haystack, carefully removes a needle, hardly disturbing the camel passing through its eye and sits herself down where the yellow stalks make interesting patterns on her skin.

She appears to be tearing up the headline very carefully, and laying out the individual letters in a line. I am waiting with growing excitement. I think that she has the basis for a really great board-game here, wherein players could take turns to make intersecting words using little squares with letters printed on them. It could be called 'Monopoly'. But all that is for the future, when I become a man, and live happily ever after with Tamara Knight.

She stares at the letters for a few minutes, as the sun sets, and tries to remember her spelling lessons from when she was pre-programmed inside her test tube. Slowly, meticulously, she spells out the phrase 'LOUSE HAS SPEECH'. The remaining letters blow away on the wind, causing a very confused rastafarian whippet breeder named I'I BERT to materialise far far away. Tamara my love! I communicate with joy, How absolutely brilliant!

And true to my words, the foothills turn into diamonds, huge gold-framed mirrors appear in serried ranks, spotlights punch the sky, celebration fireworks explode in joyous patterns, laser beams flicker and dance, a thousand volcanoes erupt and the sun goes nova . . . oh dear. I really must get this bit right or we will be incinerated before we can share our first kiss. I gather my thoughts, sift them through my sentence parsers, and slowly annunciate, Tamara, please do not interfere with what I am about to say, ahem . . . (for the first time in three episodes, Tamara is clad accidentally, and in only a strip of lace around her fetlocks, but even a hem is a start) . . . I wish that the sun which has just gone nova and is frying the landscape reverts to its former stability and that the recently erupted volcanoes become gentle tufty hillocks again.

We're allowed as much gratuitous violence as we want, but smut is out.

The sun obediently beams, gently. So far so good. The volcanoes implode and become gargantuan pubic mounds. Ah well, you can't win them all, and surrealist readers will find some satisfaction hereabout. I wish that Tamara's perfect mouth is returned to its former perfect place, and that her honour and virginity is not affected by her giving birth to a couple of goats. Tamara whoops Yipee! with delight, and every living thing on the planet urinates simultaneously. Careful baby, long ago on planet Earth an editor sits poised, blue pencil in hand, reminding us that this is a wholesome publication. We're allowed as much gratuitous violence as we want, but smut is out.

So this is it! At last! Tamara, you must now wish me into a perfect human male companion for yourself, maybe with a little moustache and some leisurewear thrown in, so we can live happy ever after, without the risk of me going critical and detonating every few hours. Tamara is taking a deep breath, which is one of the most beautiful sights in the universe, she is clearing her mind of all spurious thoughts (which doesn't take long), she is patting my tiny roundness affectionately, and now she speaks slowly and clearly. Dear Planet Astar . . . (Several million parking meters, and an army of Vulcan Added Taxmen appear) No, no, forget that . . . (The word 'that' disappears from the memories of all sentient beings in this sector of the galaxy) This is Tamara Knight speaking , and I would like you to grant me a wish so that the little bomb on the back of my neck and I can live happy ever after. OK? Alright . . . (Every signpost turns due East. Ten batallions of the Red Army march into sight singing the Horst Wessel song. Bottles of brown table sauce cover the landscape with pungent goo.) Oh Louse! It's hopeless. I wish none of this had ever happened and we could start all over again . . . oops!

. . . I'll leave you now, dear reader of earthly computer magazines called ZZIT and CRABS. Maybe we are en route to a place of specks of dust, slimeballs, swirling gases and a universe about to be born, where we'll have to wait a little less than 69 billion years for you to exist again. Maybe we'll arrive on the planet Astar, and I'll say something like You're Kidding , and we will exist in the same time loop for ever. Maybe I'll detonate before the end of this paragraph because Tamara has fallen down on the job, and I am so designed to punish her. Maybe everything will work out just . . . OH NO! We can't possibly be here! I don't believe it . . . !

To Be Continued . . .

ROUGHER THAN ROUGH
TOUGHER THAN TOUGH BUTCH HARD GUY'S FULL OF 'THE RIGHT STUFF'

GRAB A GHETTOBLASTER

Put Witty Words into Butch Hard Guy's mouth and you could collect a prize!

The hero of the latest game from ADVANCE is really tough – just the sort of friend I could do with when it comes to taking on the Spiky Haired Ones from the ZZAP! team. Mind you, they're not all horrid – a new fellow has just joined the ZZAP! crew and he's a nice peaceable Brummie by the name of Steve. Maybe if he did a bit of weight training, Steve would build up lots of muscles and end up as tough as Butch Hard Guy . . . I could really do with an ally.

Tougher than your average COMMANDO, harder than any RAMBO, Butch romps through the game that bears his name on the trail of imprisoned colleagues who have been locked up by the evil Dr Tie Fu. Using his bare fists and combat-booted feet, Butch deals death to the deadly doctor's nasty guard droids who populate the prison; Butch leaps from platform to platform to reach his buddies.

Just the sort of fellow to leap from pile of sandwich wrappers to pile of sandwich wrappers in the ZZAP! office dealing out bruises to the unpleasant Penn and Rignall. That'd put an end to their antics. Hmm. I contacted FUTURE CONCEPTS, the fellows who wrote the game for ADVANCE and they told me that Butch is terribly busy at the moment and couldn't possibly come to Ludlow to help me out. (I could swear I heard sniggerings on the other end of the phone.) Anyway, to console me they offered a Ghettoblaster, a Butch sweatshirt and headband set and a copy of the game as first prize for a competition, followed by a sweatshirt, headband and game for the second prize and a headband and game as third prize. Fifty runners-up are also set to collect a copy of the game itself.

While I try to persuade Steve, the mild-mannered new recruit to the ZZAP! team, to take up weight-training I'd like you to come up with something for Butch to say. Study the picture of Butch dealing disability to the Spiky Haired Ones and pop a few well-chosen words into his speech bubble (we don't want him to appear as dim as Rambo now do we?)

Whizz your words to me at BUTCHER THAN BUTCH, CRASH TOWERS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB, making sure they arrive before 30 April. Prizes will be awarded in order of merit. NOW COME ON STEVE, PUMP THAT IRON



LLOYD MANGRAM'S HALL of SLIME

The snow's falling in Ludlow again, but not even blocked roads could save these miscreants from the Hall of Slime . . .

Zub completed
Bounder completed 27 times
1942 completed
Terra Cresta completed
Legend of Kage completed
Rogue Trooper completed
Saboteur completed
Paperboy completed
Agent X completed
Sam Fox Strip Poker completed
Rambo completed
Three Weeks in Paradise completed
N.O.M.A.D. completed
Mugsys Revenge completed
Gyroscope completed
Pyjamarama completed
Spellbound completed
Bruce Lee completed 47 times
Avenger completed
Knight Tyme completed
W.A.R. completed
Firelord completed
F.G.T.H. completed
The Wizard, Scott Lea, Staffordshire

Dynamite Dan II Island 5
Starquake completed 69%
Batman completed
Green Beret completed
Jack the Nipper completed 100%
Paperboy Sunday
Dan Dare Sector 5
Mikie round 3 times
Commando Area 15
Match Day won Final 13-0
Ping Pong won Level 5 (11-5)
Saboteur completed on all levels
Match Point won Semifinal
Pssst 27660
Tapper Punk Bar
Cyclone 2 missions completed
Bombjack 170,000
Rocky Horror Show completed
Jason Abbs and Marcus Ducker
North Walsham, Norfolk

Knight Tyme completed 100%
Inc Shr Firemen completed
Give My Regards to Broadstreet remixed after 4 goes
Daley T's Decathlon 2 Joysticks
Avalon Catacombs of Undead
Royal Birkdale 78 for 18 holes
Saboteur £35,000
Ant Attack rescued 6
Killer Kong completed 5 levels
Finders Keepers completed
Psion Chess beat Level 5
Football Manager FA Cup 4 seasons
J.S.W. done
Manic Miner done
Movie done
Rambo completed
Scrabble beat Level 4
Hunchback done
Mark Austerfield, Worksop,
Nottinghamshire

Popeye completed
Rambo completed twice
Bounder completed all 174 levels
Split Personalities completed
International Karate completed
Street Hawk 102,009 shot second Porsche
Starquake completed
Stainless Steel Second Zone
Ghosts 'n' Goblins Third Level
A Day in the Life completed
Skool Daze completed
Bruce Lee completed 99 times
Dan Dare Fifth Area
Paperboy completed
Video Pool 15,640 Frame 6
Match Day won Final 13-1
Exploding Fists 10th Dan
Batman 6 parts of batmobile
Commando broke Area 5
Olli & Lissa Level 6
Craig Lawton, Foxhill, Sheffield

Fist II 53,900
Match Day won Final 9-1
Bomb Jack 168,600
Paperboy completed
1942 completed
Jack the Nipper Little Horror
Dragons Lair 'Burning Ropes'
Nomad completed
Beach Head II completed
Cobra completed
Commando Area 7
Monty on the Run 21,000
Zoids Great Gorgon
Cauldron II completed
Dan Dare completed
Heavy on the Magick completed
Conquest 68%
Dynamite Dan completed
Bobby Bearing got Barnaby
Batman needed one more piece of batcraft
Caves of Doom completed
Molecule Man completed
Bomb Scare completed
Chuckie Egg 418,670
Chuck II completed
Yie Ar Kung Fu completed
Ping Pong completed
Space Harrier Level 3
Scooby Doo Level 3
Terra Cresta 201,000
Jailbreak 4,700
Knights Lore 71%
Bruce Lee completed
Mikie completed
Rebel Star completed
Gary Barber and Wayne Wattam
Skegness, Lincs

Dynamite Dan II reached car park
Light Force docked with 175,900
Monty on the Run 2 flasks
Batman all but one piece
Crytical Mass finished
Nodes of Yesad 81%
Paperboy 76,948 completed

Green Beret 4 Prisons
Commando 1.5 million (with poke)
Stainless Steel all levels
Dan Dare 3 barrels
Kung Fu Master died of boredom
Philip and Huw, Kingham,
Oxfordshire

Beach Head completed all levels (highest score 112,400)
Starstrike II completed 1,637,800 (with infinite fields)
Pole Position fastest lap: 47''66, fastest race: 220'' 22, and highest score: 64,650
Z Zoom 93,990
Atic Atac completed 89%
Gilligan's Gold 31,630
Bruce Lee completed 11 times in one game
Stagecoach completed (scored 149,728)
CS Clive completed
One Man and his Droid Level 9
Specventure completed
Movie 53%
Rocky beaten Fighting Bull
Green Beret 383,150 (with poke)
Valhalla found Ofnir, Drapnir and Felstrong
Ninja Master Green Belt
Way of the Exploding Fist 10th Dan
Transformers 2 masks
Frank Brunos Boxing beaten Boxers 1,2,3,4 and 5
Wizard's Lair 2 pieces of Lion
Technician Ted 2 tasks
Saboteur completed £33,500 on Level 5
Alien 8 4 chambers
Scott Lingard

Ghosts 'n' Goblins 745,000
Ghosts 'n' Goblins (arcade version) 1,126,500
Sabre Wulf completed 98%
Underworlde completed 41%
Knight Lore completed 80%
Alien 8 completed
Nightshade completed
Cyberun completed
Fairlight completed
Tir Na Nog completed
Dun Darach completed
I.C.U.P.S. completed first game!
Pyjamarama completed 89%
3 Weeks in Paradise completed 100%
Bounder completed
Starstrike 2 completed
Highway Encounter completed
Starquake completed 76%
Monty is Innocent completed 1 min 20 secs
Robin of the Wood 128 completed
Dynamite Dan II 5th Island
Bruce Lee completed 7 times
Yie Ar Kung Fu completed 328,000
Simon Lennox, Castledawson, N Ireland

Green Beret 3rd Area
Bruce Lee completed 6 times
Beach Head completed
Beach Head II completed
Commando Stage 5
Barry Mcguigan beaten Barry
Rocky World Champion
Roller Coaster got to roller coaster
Gunfright killed 2 baddies
Full Throttle first on Donington
Exploding fist 10th Dan
Harrier Attack completed
Tapper Space Bar
Match Point won Semifinals
TLL 6 targets
Jonathan Booth

...AND I CHEATED

WINNERS & PRIZES



De Grey's bacon and egg sarnie in hand, a jam duff-nut to follow, and what could better than curling up in the broom cupboard to shuffle through a few winning entries to past competitions? Dishing out the prizes, you would no doubt think. So, without wasting further time, and getting any more jam over the paper gliders, here goes . . .

RAINBIRD STARGLIDER

Rainbird wanted to see who could design the best paper glider, and as a result the Towers were inundated with the damned things. Passers-by in Ludlow's tight little Elizabethan streets were bombarded, as hidden assassins (Spiky-Haired Ones, no doubt) hurled them from high windows on their unsuspecting heads. Anyway, when the mess was cleared up, the winner became clear. So **Peter Cousins** from Ramsgate in Kent, becomes proud owner of the £120 remote control glider, as well as a copy of *Starglider*.

Ten runners up each receive a balsa-wood chuck glider and a copy of *Starglider*. And they are:

J I Hunter, Huddersfield, DH1 4DX; S Buet, Penally, South Wales; J Singh, Shropshire, TF1 4PN; Kim Mann, London, SE20 8JB; Bruce Mason, West Sussex, BN16 9LA; Jake Metherell, Herts, AL7 2EW; Michael Fernando, London, SW16 2XL; Robert Gabriel, Devon, EX13 3EN; Lee Peleteiro, Lancs, LA3 1ED; M Snee, Wirral, L49 1SP.

Forty other runners up each receive a mini glider kit . . .

David Martin Morrison, Co Antrim, BT43 6HW; R J Spencer, Essex, SS7 5JH; Terry Jones, Coventry, CV5 7PF; M Lundbeg, Dyfed, SA38 9LA; Richard carbridge, West Yorks, BD2 4JE; Adam Vaughan, Northants, NN12 4XQ; Andrew Evans, Gwent, NP2 6AW; Michael Allison, Kent, BR2 0PA; John Welsh, Glasgow, G42 8BB; Alasdair Noble, Lanarkshire, ML3 7DF; David Parker, Notts, NG18 3DZ; M Haylor, Hants, SO1 6LU; Crash Reader, Notts, NG10 2DY; Nathan Chamberlain, Cheshire, SK11 0UH; Gavin Kearney, Belfast, BT7 3JP; Scott Longhill, Paisley, PA2 9AJ; Adrian Hughes, Derby, DE3 5AH; P A Jones, Gwynedd, LL65 3LL; Noel Chitton, Lincs, PE20 1AR; Tim Twelves, London, SE11 5TS; Anthony Goddard, Oxford, OX2 7TE; James Strange, Somerset, TA18 7SF; James Ezzard, Hants, RG22 9DN; Kevin Bly, Coventry, CV3 6NN; Matthew Clark, Bristol, BS4 1HQ; Michael Fisher, Humberside, HU16 4RQ; W A Moss, Surrey, SM5 1PG; L Beattie, Northants, NN15 7NG; John Stone, Middlesex, TW12 1AF; Matthew Hooton, Cleveland, TS18 3QD; M P Sims, Kent, GT1 1YF; K Newman, Sussex, BN1 4QA; John Hay, Dornoch, Sutherland; Shaun Hill, Kent, ME13 7SH; Peter Lewis, Shropshire, SY7 9AH; Martin Graves, Kent, ME8 8NN; Graham Camps, Oswestry, Shropshire; M Rilley, Rishton, Lancs; Gail Kirby, Newtown, Powys.

SUMPTER OUT

This is going back to the Christmas Special when Elite Systems wanted you to get rid of Sumpter. The first ten with the best solution each receive a personal stereo, and they are . . .

Tim Watkin, Cheshire, CW8 2LT; Dario Lopez, London, W12 7NL; J F Masters, Derbyshire, SK17 6RR; Richard Anderson, Belfast, BT4 3DW; Douglas Irving, Renfrewshire, PA11 3DT; Grant Jeffrey, Aberdeen, AB1 9AH; Marcus Helme, Morecombe, LA4 4BX; Richard Smith, Lancs, BB1 9JD; John Scallan, London, 4QD; Roy Fielding, Manchester, M27 1RP.

Twenty runners up each get a copy of *Hit Pack* . . .

Simon Finnis, Kent, CT2 7HR; Michael Allison, Kent, BR2 0PA; Phillip Killen, North Cardiff, CF4 2JQ; Peter Lewis, London, NW6 1EA; Ravi Scrivasan, Surrey, KT19 0LW; Michael Kilner, Herts, AL10 0RH; Andrew Banks, Wilts, SP4 7JR; Philip Rowley, Staffs, ST13 8NU; J I Hunter, Huddersfield, DH1 4DX; S Buet, South Wales; Michael Fernando, London, SW16 2XL; Terry Jones, Coventry, CV5 7PF; John Hay, Dornoch, Sutherland; John Welsh, Glasgow, G42 8BB; Alasdair Noble, Lanarkshire, ML3 7DF; Adrian Hughes, Derby, DE3 5AH; Kevin Bly, Coventry, CV3 6NN; Matthew Clark, Northants, NN15 7NG; Matthew Hooton, Cleveland, TS18 3QD; M P Sims, Kent, GT1 1YF.

ORBIX THE TERRORBALL COMP

A nice, simple little wordsquare solving was all that was required to earn one lucky Spectra-person a Domark Ghettoblaster, the person in question being **D Cross** from Hessle in North Humberside. For the 20 runners up, there's a loony ball each for your pains!

David James Smith, Essex, IG7 4BS; R Stilgoe, West Midlands, CV7 7FT; A Moore, Shropshire, SY13 1TL; Craig Young, Stockton-On-Tees, TS17 9QE; David Higgins, Kent, CT19 6JN; Simon Atkinson, Kent, TN11 9HB; Philip J King, Kent, CT5 3NH; J Logan, West Midlands, DY4 0LG; Matthew Carle, Surrey, GU5 9QE; Anthony Hindmarsh, Northumberland, NE61 5XJ; Matthew Thompson, West Yorkshire, HD7 4RH; K Clark, Leeds 12, LS12 6AW; Jamie Chiesa, St Albans, AL3 5BP; A D Whaswell, Kent, CT19 4HZ; Justin Talbot, Nottinghamshire, NG17 4DT; Marlow Silvain, London, E3 2AU; Kin Fung Fu, Manchester, M10 6TP; Wayne Binnie, Coventry, CV4 9PB; Robert Heeley, Lancs, WU2 3SE; Sam Burridge, Notts, NG25 0RE.

BECOME JUDGE DREDD

For all *2000 AD* fans, Melbourne House offered a chance for someone to pose as the dreaded Dredd and to have a portrait drawn by an Art Robot. The winner is **Liam Wheatley** from Knightsfield near Welwyn Garden City, and he also gets a copy of the game and a T-shirt.

The two runners up who each receive a 1987 *Judge Dredd Annual*, the *Judge Dredd* boardgame, a T-shirt and a copy of the game are **M Beck** from Sheffield, and **Philip Houghton** from Carlisle.

And then there are tenrunners up who each receive a copy *Judge Dredd*, the game . . .

Mark Williams, Cornwall, TR27 4NB; G Dendy, Bucks, HP19 3AH; Leo Goodchild, Essex, SS0 0BL; Robert Keating, Liverpool 19, L19 3PS; Jon Sendel, South Yorkshire, S8 8DU; 56 Franklyn Avenue, Cheshire, CW2 7NE; Michael Wright, West Midlands, WS3 3RJ; Kevin Payne, Avon, BS18 2RZ; Paul White, West Yorkshire, LS22 4JN; Chris Evans, Herts, SG12 0PY.

WANGLE A WIZARD

Mike Jones from the quaint village of Clapham in London was first out of the boot, which is nice for Mastertronic, as his reward is a short trip away to the London Dungeon museum, as well as a copy of *Feud*. Mike came up with the best method for ridding the village of the feuding brothers, and there were others almost as good. The next five each get a Magnum Joystick and a copy of *Feud*.

Nicholas Wriglesworth, Kent, CT2 9HR; Aidan Beanland, North Devon, EX32 9AJ; Alan Walton, Lancs, BB2 3NG; Howard Carlisle, Leeds, LS18 4HD; Sean Cooney, Roscommon, Ireland.

And the remaining 25 runners up each receive a copy of *Feud*.

Christopher Green, Worcestershire, WR9 8PE; Chris Evans, Herts, SG12 0PY; Bruce McCoubrie, Belfast 5, Northern Ireland; Christopher Lawley, Worcester, WR3 7UJ; Simon Scanlon, Cleveland, TS5 7PA; Paul Greenough, Manchester, M26 9GZ; Mark Lucas, Birmingham, B32 31A; Brian Steele, East Lothian, EH33 2NF; John M O'Shea, Lancs, OL12 8UJ; Paul Kennedy, Lancashire, BB3 2BN; Jan Roehrig, Thurnby, Leicester; Douglas Paterson, Glasgow, G67 4BL; Martin Shuttleworth, London, E4 7PJ; Brendan Judge, Merseyside, L37 2YY; Matthew Nobbs, Norfolk, NR5 0PL; Miss Tracy Thompson, North Wales, LL22; Ian Angell, Somerset, BA11 3DP; Nicholas Peers, Powys, LD4 4AA; Guy Higginson, London, NW3 4AH; Sebastian Cox, Hampshire, SO41 9JZ; Anthony Wilson, Hull, HU7 5BU; Jason Vine, London, SE25 4QG; David Millard, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE5 1EL; Simon Reeves, Berks, RG7 4BN; Justin Simmonds, Dorset, BH20 5BH.



JUDGE DREDD

SPECIAL GUEST JUDGE EASTWOOD















IN THE GOOD, THE VICIOUS AND VERY VERY UGLY...

NEXT PROG...

ADVENTURE CHART WRITE-IN COUPON

Please use block capitals and write clearly!

Name ....

Address ....

....

postcode   T SHIRT SIZE ....

Send your coupon to: **CRASH ADVENTURE TRAIL, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB**

My top five programs are:

TITLE	VOTE OUT OF TEN
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

CRASH HOTLINE WRITE IN COUPON

Please use block capitals and write clearly!

Name ....

Address ....

....

Postcode ....

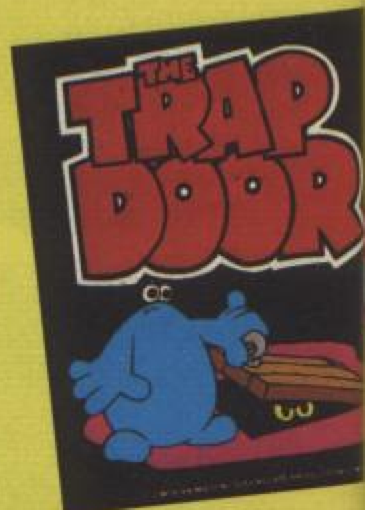
T SHIRT SIZE ....

Send your coupon to: **CRASH HOTLINE, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB**

My top five favourite programs in descending order are:

TITLE	PRODUCER
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

REVENGE OF THE SUBSCRIPTIO[N] QUEEN



GET TWELVE EDITIONS OF CRASH AND SNAP UP A RAZOR SHARP PIRANHA GAME FOR FREE!

You're probably saying to yourselves – how can the Subscription Queen top the offers she's made in the past? Of course you are. Well, for the past seven months it's been a common sight the length, breadth, height and girth of Britain to see grown men and barely formed children standing in little lines playing a series of cult games. A legend in their own town – the PIRANHA collection.

And what a collection it is, *Trap Door, Strike Force Cobra, Rogue Trooper, Nosferatu* and *The Colour Of Magic.* This is surely what you want. This is the stuff! This is why you bought your Spectrum!

All this poncing about with shooting aliens – PIRANHA is what you really want! Now you can grab yourself a CRASH subscription at the ridiculously low cost of £15 (and Queen Denise throws in post and packing don't forget) and get a FREE Piranha game of your choice! On top of that (what else could there possibly be?), if you are a CRASH subscriber, then you're entitled to knock 50p off the price of every item when you use CRASH Mail Order.

This is what made Britain Great, this is what made the Subscription Girl the QUEEN! At the very least, it's not a half bad deal!

Anyway, if you haven't already gathered, Guru Denise, our fabulous subscription Queen, has set up a very special deal for anyone who wants to subscribe to CRASH. Any one of these PIRANHA games is yours absolutely free the minute we get your subscription cheque. Here's what we're offering:

CHOOSE ANY ONE OF THE FOLLOWING.

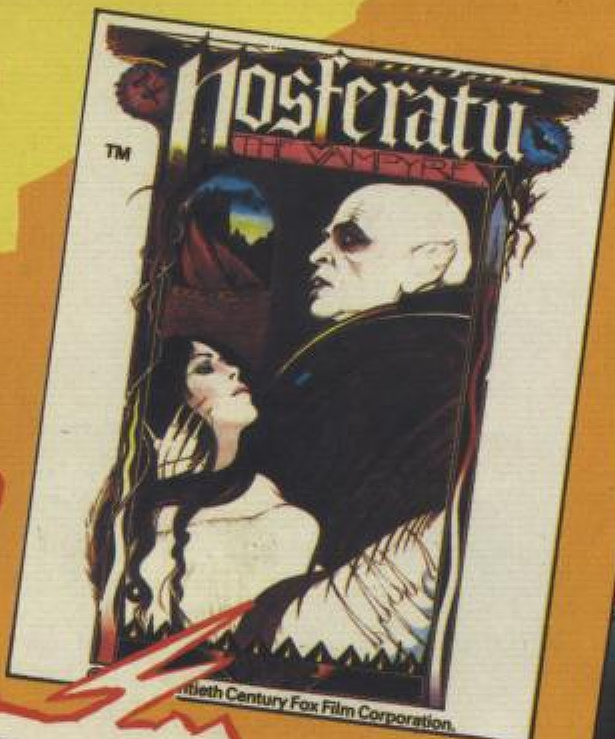
STRIKE FORCE COBRA

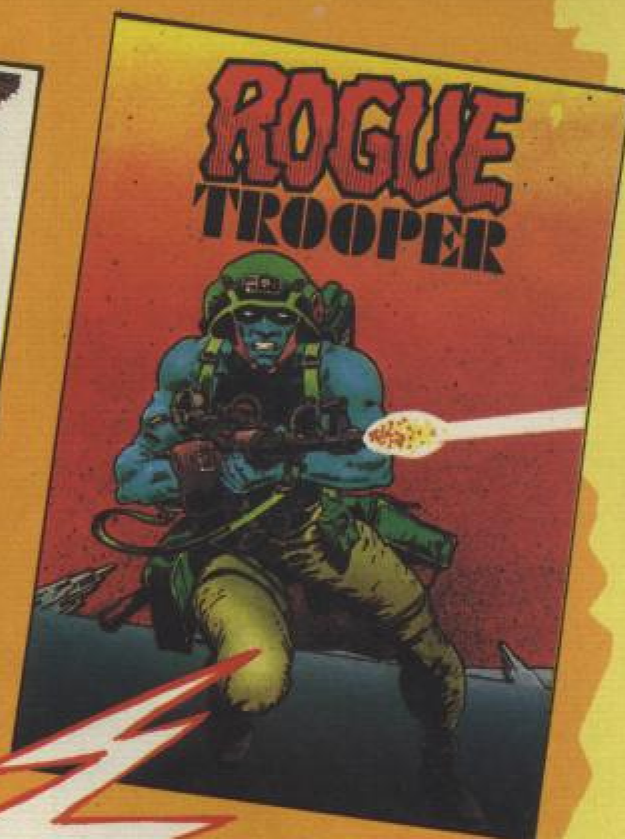
At the head of a team of five commandos, you're on a perilous mission to defeat the evil professor. Written by Five Ways Software *Strike Force Cobra* enjoys extremely fast 3D graphics, and offers loads of challenge in the form of puzzles just waiting to be solved. At 83 percent overall, it's a hard mission – can you handle it? *Very original and compelling!* **CRASH October 1986**



TRAP DOOR

Don Priestly's incarnation of the immensely popular TV series that's glued many to their TV sets over the past few months. Playing Berk, the humble servant of 'im Upstairs, you perform a series of five tasks before completing the day's work. Trap Door features huge characters, shining with colour, and a particular style of humour brings tears to your eyes! At 88 percent, *Trapdoor is very playable and addictive. An excellent game, with great graphics and fantastic colour!* said **CRASH October 1986**



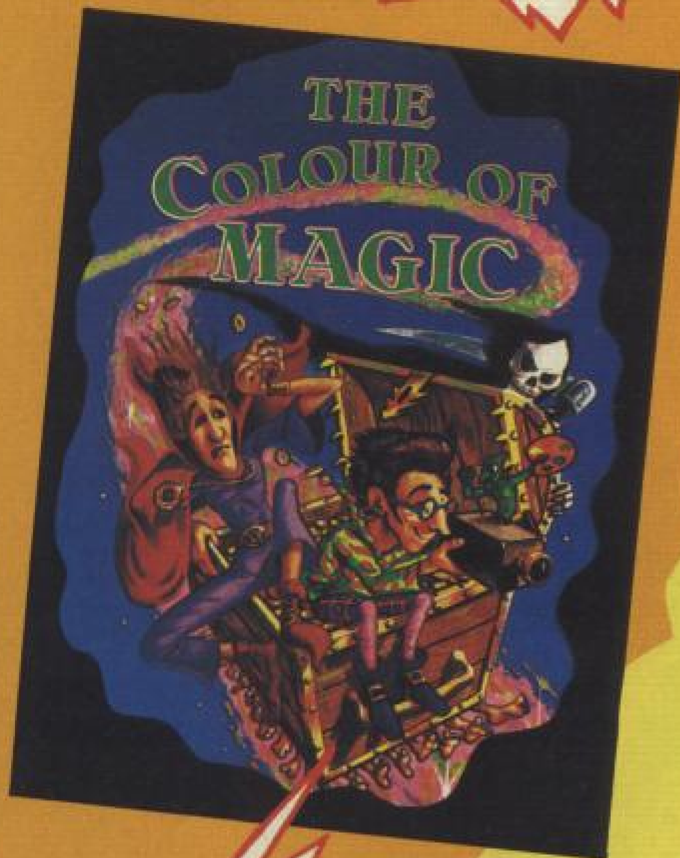


NOSFERATU

The first Piranha CRASH Smash received an amazing 91 percent Overall. Take control of Jon – our hero – as he bravely attempts to defeat the evil blood-sucking vampire, Nosferatu. Journey through the marvellous 3D rooms exploring and collecting objects to crush the evil one's power. *Love at first byte . . . I have no hesitation in recommending it* **CRASH January 1987**

ROGUE TROOPER

The highly playable interpretation of *2000 AD* comic's legendary combat hero. Programmed by delectable Design Design, it features a host of enjoyable puzzles and plenty of sicko action. Getting a tight 79 percent, it incorporates the usual high standard of graphics that we have come to expect from Design Design. *An excellent game!* **CRASH January 1987**



THE COLOUR OF MAGIC

This four-part adventure from the masters of the *Quill* and *Illustrator* – Delta 4 – got 88 percent overall in CRASH, February 1987. If you think you're magical enough to take on the role of the hapless wizard Rincewind, then climb aboard and encounter the sort of devious situations that can be enjoyed by both hardened adventurers and tyro questers alike.

DEAR GURU DENISE

Well you've really blown it now. The choice is overpowering, and I haven't a clue what I'd like as a free game from PIRANHA, because they're all so good. But fortunately I have one or two of their games already, so I suppose that narrows down my choice, and here it is:

Please tick the game of your choice – one only now . . .

- ☐ TRAP DOOR
- ☐ STRIKE FORCE COBRA
- ☐ ROGUE TROOPER
- ☐ NOSFERATU
- ☐ THE COLOUR OF MAGIC

Denise will be sending off your free PIRANHA game, just as soon as she can, but certainly within 28 days of receiving your CRASH subscription payment of £15. Just fill out the form below, make out your cheque or postal order to **NEWSFIELD LTD**, and whizz it off in the post to us at:

GURU DENISE, CRASH SUBSCRIPTIONS, PO BOX 20, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB.

Name ....

Address ....

....

....

Postcode ....

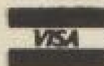
PLEASE DEBIT MY VISA/ACCESS ACCOUNT £ ☐

I wish to pay by Visa/Access (delete as applicable)

Signature Expiry Date

Please Charge My Account No:

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐





This offer is subject to availability and closes on 30 April 1987

TAYLOR MADE FO MELBO

Steve Taylor treks from the land of Fosters to talk to LEE PADDON about kangaroos and computers. Meanwhile Mastertronic snaps up Melbourne House and a strangely sober MINSON investigates.

When Steve Taylor, wizard of Oz programmer responsible for many of Melbourne House's recent Spectrum games, decides on a holiday he doesn't do things by halves. His mammoth trek will take in most of the world, but the first stop after the flight from down under had to be . . . CRASH Towers! Naturally he was met at Ludlow International Airport by Lee Paddon, eager for an interview with the jet-lagged traveller.

But things happen fast in the software world. No sooner had Steve said, 'Well, I hear there's one or two other things I should see in England, apart from the inside of this pub,' and Waltzing Matilda-ed away, than news came through that Mastertronic had bought the British end of the Australian company.

Luckily the connection with Beam Software, Melbourne House's programming wing, remains. So while I donned my investigative hat to find out just what the take over means, Lee pounded away, typing up his investigations into the Spectrum scene on the other side of the world.

'Home computing amongst the young, isn't such a big thing over there,' Steve had confessed. 'There are a lot of Commodores, a few Amstrads, but virtually no Spectrums.' What, you cry, we must start a collection to help these poor, deprived cobbers. But there's worse to come. The size of the country and lack of computer magazines means there's not the same excitement over new releases, and top arcade conversions can go by almost unnoticed.

The Australians suffer similar shortages when it comes to home grown software. There's a small firm in Sydney, churning out strategy games, but that's it . . . apart from Melbourne House, which finds itself in the enviable position of having no real competition.

The company consists of several divisions. As well as Beam there's Arcade Machine, which is dedicated to the noble cause of producing top-rate shoot 'em ups. **Bazooka Bill** has just blasted his way out of their offices and into British shops. Keeping it all under control is Fred Milgrom, who not only owns the company, along with his wife, Judy, but is also head of program development.

Fred had the pick of Australian computer talent when it came to recruiting Beam's staff of 25 programmers, which makes it the biggest programming team outside Japan and the US. They work together in groups of four or five, taking responsibility for a game from start to finish.

Steve Taylor first came to Beam while studying Computer Science at Melbourne University. Though the mainframes were meant for more academic pursuits, Melbourne students relaxed by playing **Rogue**, a non-graphic, non-real time adventure set in a huge and complex labyrinth, inhabited by monsters who have special powers and individual patterns of behaviour. While some of them may be out-and-out cowards, others can be sneaky and vicious.

Eventually the time came to say goodbye to the halls of learning – and to **Rogue**! – and Steve joined Melbourne House full-time. His first project will bring a murmur of recognition from Spectrum veterans – it was **Horace to the Rescue**. Unluckily this missing episode from the life of the small, blue hero was never completed because the project leader suffered a collapsed lung.

Steve's next work did appear though, and with all apologies to Horace fans, it proved a much more exciting debut. **Way of the Exploding Fist** needs no introduction, and helped establish Steve as a conversion programmer. Next came **Rock 'n' Wrestle**, a slightly controversial release, but the teletext style graphics didn't stop Steve getting typecast as Beam's Spectrum graphics man.

Just before he left Australia to see the world (and Ludlow) Steve had been working on **Fist II**. 'I've finished my bit – the graphics. Now it's just a question of putting in all the plot and checking the game play. I think that the graphics are an improvement on **Fist**, with larger characters and more frames of animation, and I think they're better drawn.' Steve also worked on the database unpacking and the scrolling as well as the sprites – versatile fellow!

The popularity of the 'serious' micros down under

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"I'd like to see games where you can create a world then see how it develops – especially if other people are competing with you."

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means that Steve's personal fave games include an Apple II title, **Robot War**. In this each player programs a robot, taking into account factors such as collision and damage detection. These android champions then do battle against each other, the smartest program producing a winner.

'My friends and I would have great fun writing programs and testing them out against each other,' Steve recalls. 'That was the great thing. It was effectively a game with as many players as you like. One program would emerge as a front runner, then somebody else would come up with a program that could beat it, and so it went on.

'It wasn't particularly well presented,' he adds, 'but that idea, if it was worked on for a bit could turn into something really interesting. It's certainly the sort of game I'd like to play. It's rather like the craze for Life games, where you set up a colony and see what happens. I'd like to see games where you can create a world then see how it develops – especially if other people are competing with you. It's one of the few really promising areas left, where there might be some interesting, unexplored ideas.'

Given this emphasis on strategy and depth, it should come as no surprise that Steve is also an **Elite** addict. 'I think that is just about the ideal sort of game. It introduces strategy in a really subtle way. So subtly that the average arcade freak doesn't realise he's playing a strategy game. If he likes he can just hang around outside a station and blast the cops.'

A mention of **Starion**, which came from Melbourne House's British arm, is met with similar enthusiasm. 'The arcade sequence was far better than **Elite**, but the plot wrapped round it was rather silly. Solving crosstix made a nice rest from all the frantic blasting, but it didn't add to the atmosphere. You just weren't fooled for a minute.'

But his choice of software, and a fondness for **Empires of the Middle Ages**, a leadership boardgame, don't mark down Steve as an out and out strategy freak. At Bondi Beach he's less likely to be sunning himself amongst the surfers than in the shade of an amusement arcade, playing **Rampage**.

In **Rampage** you take the part of Godzilla, tearing down buildings and picking up pretty girls – literally! 'All the things you'll find in a really bad Japanese monster movie are there,' Steve chuckles. He also retains a nostalgic fondness for that ancient smash, **Battlezone**. 'There are still a few machines lurking in corners of amusement arcades and I still find them hard to resist.'

When we asked Steve to gaze into his crystal ball, he voiced the desire of many programmers, to see a move from 8 bit, 64K machines. This was just before news of the Plus 3, with its disk drive, leaked from Fort Amstrad, but that's sure to please him.

"I wouldn't say that there are no good ideas left on the 8 bit machines, because every time somebody does say that, somebody else comes up with something to prove them wrong."

'Having more memory allows you not only to put more plot into a game. You can also get smoother animation, by using more frames, and you don't have to spend most of your time writing data compression routines. You can also use faster buffers, and so make the game run faster.'

Of course, future developments will eventually depend on what sort of game is considered commercially viable, but Steve remains hopeful. 'I wouldn't say that there are no good ideas left on the 8 bit machines, because every time somebody does say that, somebody else comes up with something to prove them wrong. But,' he adds, 'I do think that great new games are going to be few and far between. We'll see a lot of variations on the same old themes.'



There's a neat twist to all of this. Geoff Heath left Melbourne House to join Mastertronic. Now he's to be reunited with many of his old colleagues.

Geoff is keen to emphasise that, 'Melbourne House will retain its own identity. We will be raising the company profile and ensuring that the product is as exciting as possible, but it will remain a separate entity from Mastertronic. It won't be producing budget titles, and Mastertronic won't be going full price. It has a terrific reputation, and we intend to keep it that way.'

But there is one rather sad change. Though Melbourne House will retain most of its editorial and marketing staff, it looks certain that they will be leaving their delightful HQ in leafy Hampton Wick for Mastertronic's offices, which lie in a rather dingy City sidestreet. However there could be a stay of execution on this move.

With all the Mastertronic labels, Bulldog, the new Mastersounds record label and Mastervision videos, and the Arcadia arcade machine specialists in Paul Street, there's scarcely room for the legendary Mastertronic pin ball machine – 'Which is responsible for keeping us all sane,' according to Geoff – let alone more staff.

But, apart from the fact that most Melbourne House Spectrum titles will now sell for £7.95, you're unlikely to notice any other major changes in the near future. The link with Beam Software and the Australian operation will remain for at least the next two years. Products will also continue to be commissioned from British programmers, which includes Mike Singleton's **Lord of the Rings** arcade game.

This is set during the War of the Ring and you control the Fellowship of the Ring, plus the armies of good. Meanwhile the computer controls the evil armies and the independent characters.

According to Melbourne House's Jane Denning, who had just seen the initial sprites, it looks great, and though it's officially scheduled for July, is likely to be held back, to take full advantage of the hype and razmatazz generated by September's PCW show.

Martin Alper, who runs Mastertronic's American operation, is also very excited about it, Jane told me. One of the benefits of the takeover is that Melbourne House will profit from Mastertronic's unrivalled distribution. 'And it will be a lot easier dealing with a head office which is just around the corner, rather than in Australia,' she added. No more phone calls in the middle of the night!

So as it's all change, no change, let the last word go to Steve Taylor, now lost in the depths of Europe. Lee did just manage to ask him about his next project before he escaped from the pub.

> **Some people seem to think that so long as you put lots of monsters in and lots of shooting, you've got a good game.**

It's an arcade game with a Dungeons and Dragons flavour, Steve told him, based in part on that Melbourne University Unix favourite, **Rogue**. Steve's main fear is that it will be mistaken for just another **Gauntlet** clone. 'Those games are okay, but rather tedious. There are loads of monsters, but they're so stupid. They just line up to die. Some people seem to think that so long as you put lots of monsters in and lots of shooting, you've got a good game.'

Steve promises a much more strategic program. So keen is he to get down to work that he's been coding in his own time. Sadly it had to be put to one side when **Fist II** reached its hectic conclusion, but programming resumes at full speed when Steve returns from the Grand Tour. And who knows, maybe all those Italian drivers or Paris's sewers will provide inspiration for some new, even more terrifying fiends!

With that, Steve downed his pint and, stopping only to ask directions to 'Europe' from a passing Ludlovian, started his holiday proper. Nobody suspected that business deals taking place between Australia and the East End of London would mean a change in ownership for Melbourne House, UK.

> **Melbourne House will retain its own identity. We will be raising the company profile and ensuring that the product is as exciting as possible, but it will remain a separate entity from Mastertronic.**

NOW FROM THE AUTHORS OF BATMAN COMES...



DOUBLE TROUBLE

Hi! My name's Mr. Head. Some say I'm the one with the brains but I don't think my flat footed friend would agree. I'm a real sharp shooter, but without my pal Mr. Heals I'd get nowhere fast…or slow! I can jump like a flea and even glide but Heals is the Daley Thompson of the two of us – he's FAST! Together, if we can find each other, we really do make an awesome twosome, and that's the only way we can overcome the emperor Blacktooth. The last time we entered Castle Blacktooth we found the crowns of THREE of the supressed kingdoms but by that time I'd run out of doughnut ammunition and my buddy was lost somewhere in the Safari world – it was the closest we had come to defeating that rapscallion – we were jumping for joy, splitting our sides, dying with laughter…we were Head over Heals!

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Crash Competition

Perhaps the best add-on you can have for a Spectrum is a colour monitor – not only do your favourite games take on a whole new aspect, appearing on screen in glorious pin-sharp colour, but there are no arguments about who should use the family telly. With a colour monitor you can indulge in technicolour gameplay to your heart's content without interfering with anyone else's viewing.

So we had a chat with the people at **FERGUSON** – a company famous for making tellies and monitors amongst other things – and they agreed to donate three of their MC05 monitor TVs as prizes. They've included a trio of interfaces (needed to connect the Spectrum's RGB output to the monitor), and just for fun, we've thrown in three brand new Spectrum Plus Twos. Rather than go totally over the top and give all this hardware away in one go, the Powers That Be in CRASH Towers have ordained that one of these super prize packages should be given away this month, another next month, and the third in the June Issue.

The MC05 is a very neat piece of equipment, allowing you to enjoy a first class colour display for your games, and it also doubles up as a telly – so when you tire of going for the high score to beat all high scores on the latest arcade conversion, a prod of a button and twiddle of a knob allows you to tune into the *A Team* or the *Nine O'clock News*.

Such terrific technology doesn't come cheap – the monitor and interface would normally set you back around £245, and when you add in the cost of a Spectrum Plus Two, the whole package would cost twenty-five pee short of £375. But it could be yours for the price of a stamp!

What we'd like you to do this month is scratch your mapping brain cells, select a nice clean sheet of paper and settle down to producing a wonderful map of one of your favourite computer games. But please note; we're not looking to re-carpet CRASH Towers, so ensure your entries are NO LARGER than A2 in size (approximately 24 inches by 16). Check through your CRASH collection and make sure you choose a game that we haven't mapped yet – we'd like to print the winning entry in all its glory in Lloyd's Playing Tips.

Ten runner-up prizes of CRASH Hats and T-Shirts are also on offer, so get mapping! Entries will be judged on 30 May, so make sure your wondrous cartographical creations arrive at CRASH MAPS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB in time for the judging ceremonies.



R COMPUTING COMP



CRASH

MICRO GAMES ACTION

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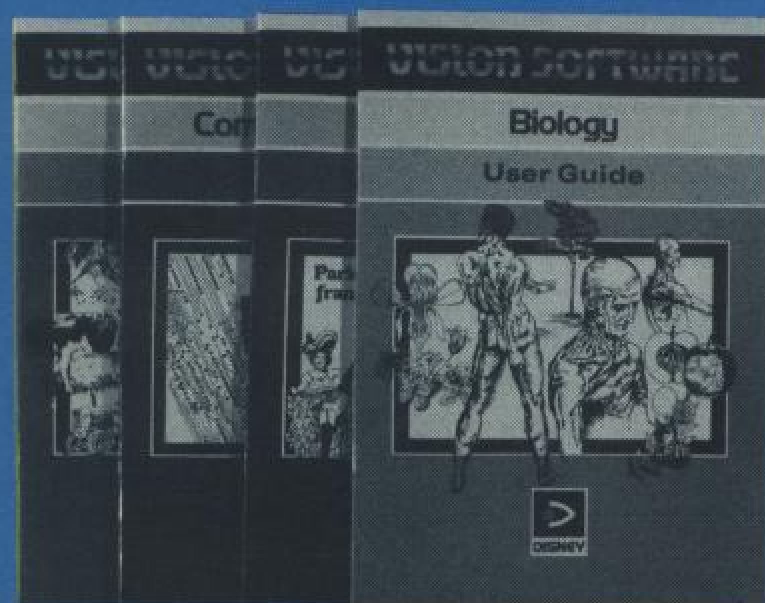
CRASH COURSE



by Rosetta McLeod



VISION GIVES NEW INSIGHTS



With exams on the horizon, Crash Course takes a look at the *Vision* range of revision software from DISNEY. These are programs which have been specially prepared by educational advisers and, before launch, were tested by classroom teachers in a series of trials. The nine subjects are deliberately aimed at students who wish to improve their knowledge and expertise, by continual interactive dialogue in subject terminology, techniques and understanding. As such, the software is ideal for individual use, or by small groups of students in the classroom discussing the material as it is presented. The programs can also be used as a 'library' facility for students working on modules of their choice, and also as an activity for small groups at an appropriate stage in their course of study.

All of the packages are constructed in the same way: each of the 29 units of software uses a single program, with the screen and user interaction being driven via individual data sets developed for each unit and subject. When the main program has loaded, the menu offers up to six topics which are then loaded in sequence. Each topic consists of a group of ten questions, some requiring True/False or Yes/No responses, while others provide a multi-choice option. Some questions automatically provide hints or help, while others offer you a choice of clues, and most questions allow at least two attempts before the correct response is displayed. A particularly useful feature is that extra information is always displayed at the foot of the screen, whether or not the correct answer has been given. The scoring system is also common to all of the packages: correct answers are awarded a score, and graded according to whether they were achieved first time or after prompting – the score is displayed automatically on completion of a topic.

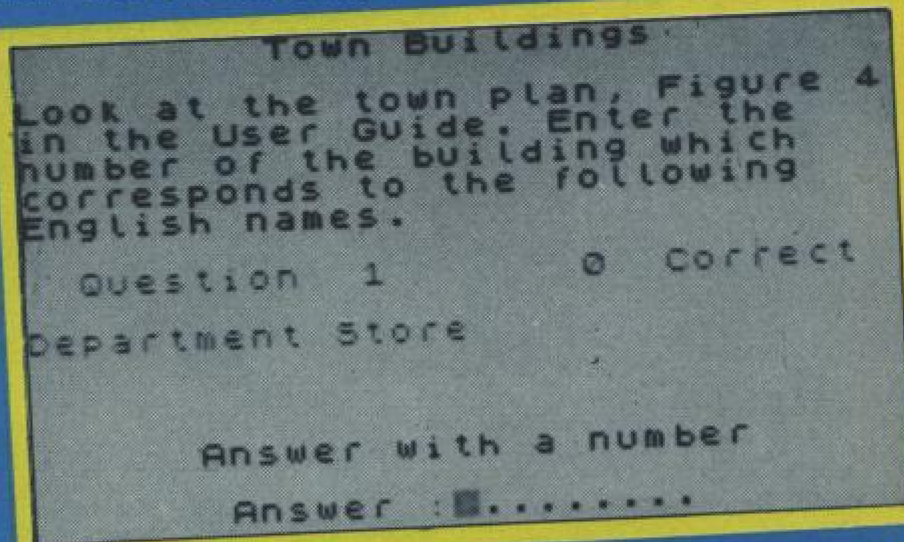
For programs such as 'French', where language accents are required, a keystrip is provided to correspond to the number keys. The User's Guide which comes with each package lists the various topics covered and gives a rating from A to C, with A being the most difficult. This helps the teacher to select the various sections for specific classes. A space is also provided for the teacher to insert his own tape counter to simplify the subsequent finding of any particular topic. All of the packages are aimed at reinforcing knowledge already acquired, rather than teaching from scratch, though the screen notes do give additional pieces of relevant information. No screen graphics are used, with any necessary diagrams being included in the User's Guide.

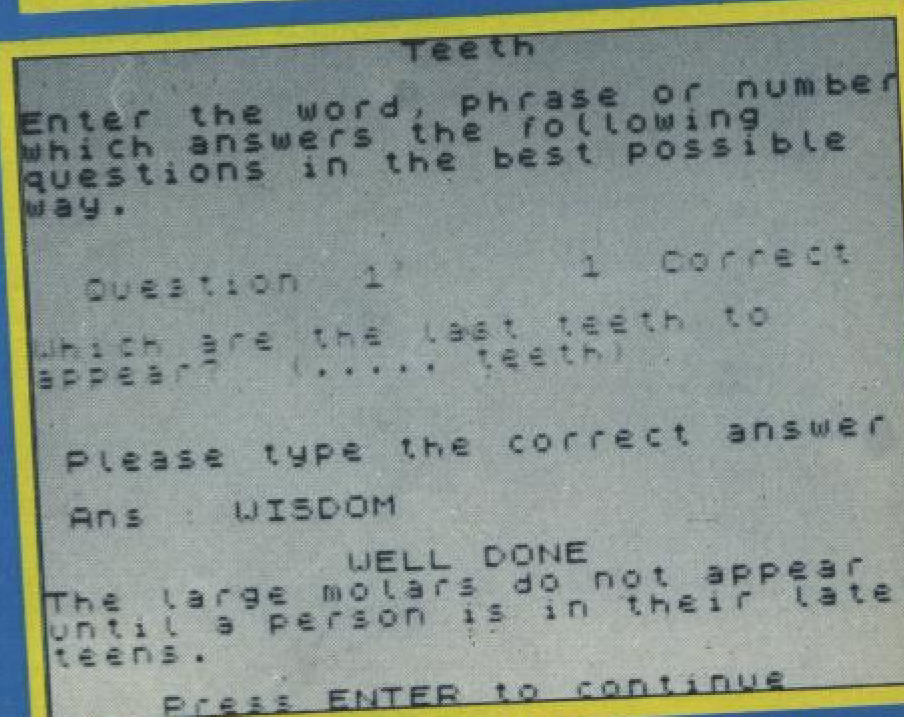
In addition to the programs reviewed here, *Vision* also covers Chemistry, Physics, German, History and Information Processing. The packages are available from DISNEY, 6 Pilkington Avenue, Sutton Coldfield, B72 1LA. The program prices are – *French* £11.45, *Biology* £11.80, *Geography* £12.20 and *Computer Science* £12.80.

FRENCH

This package is the first of two currently available, and covers Time, Shopping and Travel. The first cassette begins with simple arithmetic in which a sum written out in French must be answered correctly. Moving on from this through Dates and Times, where multi-choice questions are used, a section on Weather gives French statements such as 'Quand il pleut, on a beoin d'un parapluie', which must then be said to be True or False. After the answer has been given, the sentence is translated into English at the foot of the screen, and a brief note is also given eg 'pleuvoir - to rain, il pleuvra - future tense'. The last section on side one of the first cassette covers the reading of a railway timetable and for this the user has to revert to the timetable printed in the User's Guide.

The second side gives five short programs on various aspects of shopping: Items of shopping, Types of shops, Shop signs, Shop advertisements and Going shopping. A whole range of vocabulary is reinforced or introduced in this section, and again, the notes at the foot of the screen are particularly helpful. The second cassette covers Travel on side









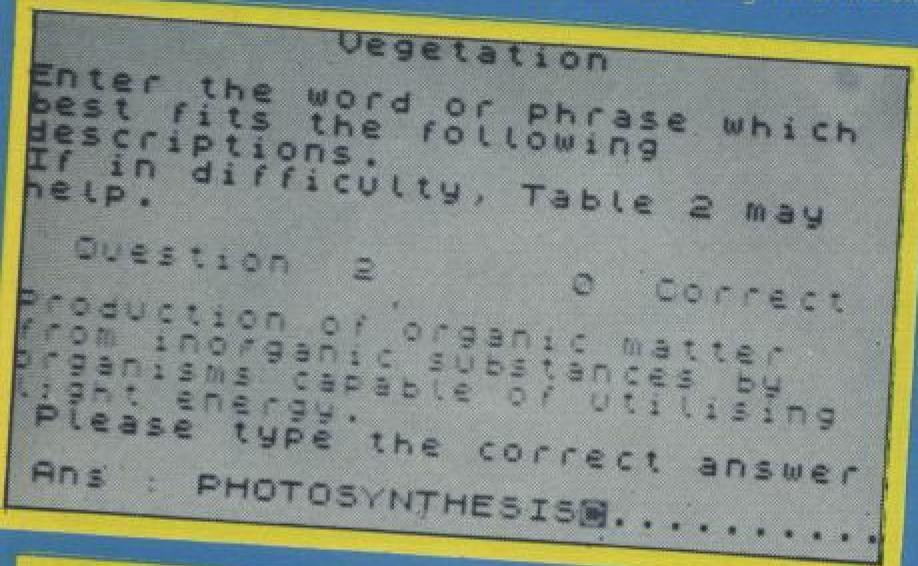

one, and In Town on side two. As no graphics are used in any of the packages, the student is referred to certain figures in the User's Guide – for instance, a station plan must be consulted in order to answer questions about where in a railway station you would hear certain statements.

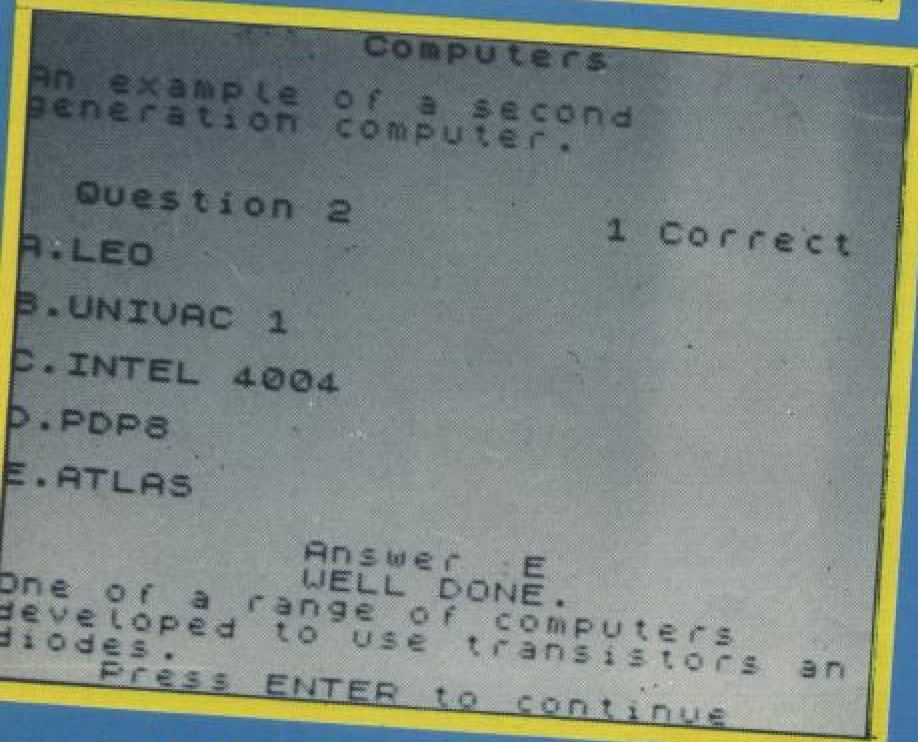
What impressed me most about this package was the fact that the vocabulary and situations dealt with, are those which a visitor to France would probably encounter. A student would not only test his present knowledge, but would also build up more knowledge through the additional notes. *French* Unit Two, covers the topics of Leisure and Meeting People. These packages could be used with a fairly wide age group, from those beginning the study of French, to more advanced students.

BIOLOGY

As with the *French* packages, there are two units of *Biology* available. Unit one covers the human senses and digestion, while the second unit goes on to deal with major systems and human anatomy. No attempt is made to use screen graphics in the programs, but a number of diagrams are included in the User's Guide. The first cassette in Unit 1, looks firstly at the Eyes and Ears, and then the Skin and Nervous System. Each of the these sections involves the correct labelling of the diagrams in the guide, and follows this with a range of multi-choice and True/False questions.

The second cassette adopts the same sort of techniques for the Anatomy of Digestion and Digestive Processes. The topics are covered in great depth, and the teacher would have to be selective concerning which sections are suitable for various age groups of pupils. To help with this, the summary of topics in the guide grades each one from A to C, with A once again being the most difficult. Although the package is said to be suitable for use with pupils from the age of 11, the very detailed nature of the content is unlikely to be relevant for such a young age group, and the absence of screen graphics tends to make the content rather dry. Certainly though, older students will find these programs a very useful aid for home study, and teachers will be able to use them to reinforce their teaching. The extra informative text means that a wealth of information on each of the sections is covered, and a teacher might wish the student to take detailed notes of these 'free' facts. The scores count, and the facility for accessing a summary of scores on all the sections attempted, are useful in helping students to monitor their own progress. *Biology* is a very comprehensive package, which lends itself to flexible use both in the classroom and in the home situation.





GEOGRAPHY

Four separate packages are available for *Geography*, covering the Physical, Economic, Urban and Recreational aspects of the subject. Unit one, Physical Geography, begins with a detailed study of Time, Earth and Atmosphere. This focuses on the planet Earth, the geological column and atmospheric processes, and then moves on to soils, vegetation, biomes, the influence of man, and famous people. Two Soils and Vegetation tables are provided in the User's Guide, giving short lists of the technical terms which the user will need to know. In the section on soils, for example, terms such as azonal, eluvial, leaching and regolith are used, while the vegetation topic assumes knowledge of hydrophytes, megatherms and zerophytes. In each of these topics, a description appears on screen and the student must use the table to type in the word or phrase which fits the description: for example, a soil order strongly influenced by the climatic conditions of an area – Zonal. Both Soils and Vegetation are given an A grading, to mean that they are the most difficult, but topics are the most difficult, but topics graded C – the planet Earth, the geological column and the influence of man – are not pitched at such a high level, and would be of more use in dealing with younger students.

The second cassette deals with hydrology, glaciation and underground water, and then goes on to cover landscapes – including coasts and deserts. In glaciation, students are given a piece of information, and they then must guess the landscape feature. If an incorrect answer is given, up to four new pieces of information are supplied by the computer, but the user can refer to the table in the Guide where landscape features such as accumulation, drumlin, moraine, and pleistocen are listed. The package also contains a Glossary of Terms, but unfortunately not all the terms are listed. I had to refer to a dictionary to find out the meaning of pleistocene! Used in the classroom, however, this package would provide a useful reinforcement aid for the teaching of Geography – particularly for older students.

COMPUTER SCIENCE

This package on Hardware and Applications is the first unit of four. The others cover Data Processing and Communications, Fundamental Concepts, and Programming and Analysis. With Computer Science now being offered in most secondary schools, a number of educational programs have been appearing on the market, and this particular range is certainly one of the most comprehensive I have seen. The first cassette begins with the history and development of computers and computer languages and the user has to respond correctly to the following type of question: "Enter the name of the language which best fits the description – Developed initially for teaching, but now a popular microcomputer language." I'm sure you all know the answer – Basic – but the note which then appears at the foot of the screen gives you the additional piece of information that Basic was developed around 1965 at Dartmouth College in the USA. It was these notes that I found particularly useful and interesting in this program. True/False responses are also made use of, such as in this example from the section on Communications: "Teletext and Viewdata systems were made available in 1977 – True or False?" The note again gives more details naming Ceefax from the BBC, Oracle from ITV and Prestel from the PO. Going on to the section on General Terminology, the student is asked questions on Input/Output, Memory and Communications, General Abbreviations, Processing, and General Computing Terms.

The second cassette deals in more detail with Input and Output as two separate topics, and covers terminology for each, as well as issues such as data capture and graphical displays. Most of the topics have a B grading, with only three out of twenty being classed as A, most difficult. Together, the four separate packages on Computer Science give a very thorough grounding in all aspects of the topic, and would be useful not just for students preparing for an examination, but for anyone wishing to build up his knowledge in this particular field. I certainly gleaned all sorts of information merely by working through this first unit.

COMMENTS

Control keys: kept as simple as possible, with a keyboard overlay being provided for use with the *French* program
Keyboard response: good
Graphics: none, diagrams and tables are included in the User's Guide
Use of colour: limited
General rating: the programs provide useful reinforcement in their respective subjects, particularly for older students. Although the software is claimed to be suitable for pupils from the age of eleven, it is doubtful that teachers would wish students of such an early age group to go into the sort of detail that is covered

THE SECOND BRITISH PBM CONVENTION



On 7th February (Year Of Our Lord Kidd 1987), more than 1,200 PBMers converged upon the Porchester Hall, somewhere in London. The turnout was impressive – enthusiasts young, old, male, female, in between, new and experienced, a mixed bunch by anybody's standards. Were you there? If not, then you missed a great day out!

ARRIVAL

I turned up half an hour after the doors opened (oh, alright – I confess – half an hour before the bar opened) and was instantly taken aback by what I saw – people, and lots of them. A much better attendance than last year's convention.

After figuring out where everything was, I donned my invisible CRASH PBM CORRESPONDENT hat and trudged forth to see what gossip and news could be gleaned from GMs and gamers alike . . .

COMPANY NEWS

Most of the 25 companies present had something to say about their games of today and tomorrow.

KJC GAMES decided to turn up for the event – apparently after a lot of deliberation. *Crasimoffs World* fans will be glad to hear that the game is not being shelved. Instead, KJC are revamping the game and issuing it under a different company logo, CRASIWORLD LTD.

MITREGAMES are having a busy time after deciding to reintroduce *Starmaster* – and they're launching a new SF project, *Starship Commander* (billed as a quick-turnaround, low-cost game). More next month!

RAMPAGE GAMES have decided to stop offering positions in their popular game, *From the Mouth of Hell*. They say they're concentrating company efforts on their Chicago-gangland game *St Valentine's Day Massacre* and the design/playtest of a new game due out later this year (let's hope it's up to their usual high standard).

An original game which has oft caught my eye is *Muskets & Mules*, the Napoleonic wargame moderated by HISTORICAL ENGINEERING of Cambridge. *Muskets & Mules* is a highly strategic four-player wargame; it's a very accurate simulation of the Napoleonic Wars in North Central Europe (1805-1809).

Players choose the country which they wish to command; each country has advantages and disadvantages, reflected by their different turn costs. And then the war begins . . .

The excellent rulebook has 61 packed pages, far too many to condense sensibly here. If you're an avid wargamer prepared to spend between £10 and £13 (depending upon the power you rule) each fortnight, then send an SAE to: HISTORICAL ENGINEERING, **The Stable, The Temple, Great Wilbraham, Cambridge, UK**. There's no denying this is an expensive game, but I think wargamers will appreciate it.

NEW(ISH) GAMES

LEGEND have been operating since September '86, running their fantasy role-playing game (called *AEs*) to a very high standard – I was shown some of their turnsheets by a player I met in the bar at the convention, and I was very impressed.

In the game you roleplay a fresh young adventurer in a land of danger – you must expand your experience to become a legend. Details from: LEGEND INCORPORATED LIMITED, **38 Overton Drive, Chadwell Heath, Romford, Essex RM6 4AE** (Incidentally, 'AEs' is pronounced 'Ayus' – Novel!).

M.A.G established their new game, *Crisis*, at the convention. Their stand was busy all day with people crowding round to see this low-priced game of global war . . . which brings me to *Megalomania*, another new game involving strategy, diplomacy and world conquest. Full reports of these games are coming up in the next few issues, so keep your eyes open!

GENERAL STUFF

Everybody who attended the convention enjoyed themselves. Mixed in with the London Mafia were PBMers from all over the island – even a clan of Glaswegians (headed by Jimmy 'The Champ' Johnson) who'd travelled for seven hours on a coach to attend! The organisers did a very good job – well done, Mike McGarry, Wayne and Co. Perhaps next year the PA will be audible. We can but hope . . .

BRENDON'S BRIEF GUIDE TO GAMES LAUNCHED AT THE CONVENTION:

Gameplan An American Football Simulation
Details: SLOTH ENTERPRISES, **FREEPOST, Southampton SO9 1BH**

Starship Commander Sci-fi strategy/diplomacy game
Details: MITREGAMES LTD, **189 Balham High Road, London SW12**

Further Into Fantasy real-time fantasy role-playing game. Worth trying.
Details: THE LABORATORY, **Box 66, 19 Colbourne Street, Swindon, Wiltshire SN1 2EQ**

Shattered World Strategic survival wargame
Details: Jade Games, **FREEPOST, Southsea, Hants PO4 0BR**

Infinite Adventures FRP set in an "archaic and sometimes chaotic land."
Details: M.A.G., **Windrush H-B, Harelands Lane, Woking, Surrey, GU21 4NY**

Crisis Popular US game of world domination using nukes and armies. Fast-moving.
Details: M.A.G., ***Crisis*, 6 Brinkburn Gds, Edgeware, London**

AEs FRP adventure. Very good turnsheets.
Details: LEGEND INCORPORATED LTD, **38 Overton Drive, Chadwell Heath, Romford, Essex RM6 4EA**

Trolls Bottom Unusual game about being a hunting/digging/feuding Troll. Different.
Details: PROJECT BASILISK, **PO Box 24, Sheerness, Kent**

Delenda Est Carthago Mature person's FRP diplomacy game. For the thinker!
Details: WAVENEY GAMES, **28 Diprose Road, Corfe Mullen, Wimborne, Dorset BH21 3QY**

Kingdom of Orion Fast fantasy wargame. A game for the power-crazed.
Details: ORION GAMES, **6 St Austell Road, Manchester M16 8QW**

Megalomania: Strategic/diplomatic wargame – conquer the Earth! Good value. Cash prize for the winner.
Details: PHOENIX GAMES, **Stoneleigh, Holly Lane, Upper Ellwood GL16 7LG**

DON'T FORGET TO SEND A LARGE S.A.E.

PBM AWARDS: THE RESULTS

Everyone at the convention was issued with a voting form so they could nominate their favourites for awards. The results are below . . .

BEST PBM COMPANY OF THE YEAR
1 SLOTH ENTERPRISES
LEGEND
3 VENGEANCE GAMES

BEST ROLE–PLAYING GAME
1 *Saturnalia*
2. *AEs*
3. *Orion's Finger*

BEST NEW GAME
1 *AEs*
2. *It's a Crime!*
3. *Where Lies the Power*
b/w *Delenda Est Carthago*

BEST TRIBAL GAME
1 *Tribes of Crane*
2. *World of Vengeance*
3. *Explorers of Orion*

BEST SCIENCE-FICTION GAME
1 *StarGlobe*
2. *Capitol*
3. *Vorcon Wars*

BEST TACTICAL/ DIPLOMACY GAME
1 *Kings of Steel*
2. *Global Supremacy*
3. *Earthwood*

BEST PBM COVERAGE IN A MAGAZINE
1 *Flagship*
2. **CRASH**
3. *Adventurer*

BEST GM OF A HAND-MODERATED GAME:
1 John Tool
2. Neil Packer
3. Paul Chatterton

Do YOU agree with them? Write in and let me know!

NEW FANZINE

Dear Brendon,
I am planning to start a fanzine for low-cost amateur PBM games, games, which I feel offer as much as the 'pro' games for a fraction of the cost. If any **CRASH** readers run such games and would like to be included, then please send me details.

John Woods, 91 Wandle Road, Morden, Surrey, SM4 6AD

This seems like a good opportunity for cheap advertising if you're running a game; why not help John out by posting him details? Let me know how you get on, John!

BK

A GOOD DAY

Dear Brendon,
I thought I'd write and give you my impressions of the Second British PBM convention, and also ask a few questions.

I thought the convention was an excellent affair: it gave me the chance to look over many games and to chat with the players involved. This has helped me make up my mind about a few offerings.

All of the organisers, players and company reps were very helpful and informative: I learned more in that one day than I had in the previous six months! My only criticism is that the refreshments were limited in variety, though they were good.

I enjoyed myself immensely – I feel very sorry for any PBMer forced to miss the event, and I'll certainly attend next year, if a date and venue is set.

Now for the questions: following the convention, I am considering joining *Explorers of Orion*; what's your opinion of the game, and have you any tips?

BC Steele, West Drayton, Middlesex

I'm very pleased you enjoyed the convention: I quite agree, 'twas an excellent affair! As you comment, the refreshments were a bit limited, but remember – this was no PCW Show!

As for Explorers of Orion, *well, I must confess I've never played the game. The only guide I can offer you is that the latest* Flagship *Factors rated it a very good 7.5 out of 10 for value.*

Are there any E of O players out there willing to send in some tips? Please?

BK

A PRIMITIVE WRITES

Dear Brendon,
I'd like to complain about CONQUEST GAMES, who – after taking an eternity replying to my startup – have given me the role of a primitive. This race cannot build roads, cities, bridges etc.

D Moyce, Lampeter, Dyfed

I agree that CONQUEST GAMES are sometimes slow at sending out startups – it's because of their waiting list, no doubt. Don't worry about the race you've been issued with. It's a case of whether a glass is half-empty or half-full – have you noticed the advantages of being a primitive?

BK

CRASH ALLIANCE

Dear Brendon,
Thanks very much for the PBM MAILBOX, it's the best part of the whole mag! Oh, and thanks also for the *It's a Crime!* offer – if it weren't for that, I wouldn't be enjoying the hobby today.

M Flint, Sawston, Cambs

Aw shucks . . .

BK

THE BEST PART

Dear Brendon,
I'm writing to let you know of my newly-formed alliance in *StarGlobe Four.* Called the CRASH ALLIANCE, it's aimed at Anti-Company **CRASH** readers and I'd like to invite SG4 players to join.

I am CRASH DIPLOMAT 003, should anyone want to get in touch with me by post. *StarGlobe* is a great game and I recommend it highly!

T Smith, Braunstone Frith, Leicester

I've heard from another SG4 organisation as well as Travis's alliance: THE ATTRIBUTII, run by Captain Hari Mule of the starship ORLANDES III. Captain Mule's alliance is aimed at Spectrum owners. You can send either alliance a note via Game Control requesting further information!

BK

FUN WITH FIGURES

Dear Brendon,
I am an avid role-playing fan, but I have problems finding a gang of people ready to play a full session. Because of this I'm considering getting into PBM, but I need a few points explained to me.

I often read letters in your column saying "I am in *StarGlobe 3* and *Vorcon Wars 65* . . . " I realise the number is the game number – but how do you become a player in a particular game number?

Two more questions: is *From the Mouth of Hell* by RAMPAGE GAMES as good as it sounds . . . and what is the address for *StarGlobe*?

By the way, I think you should press for more pages – your column is read by many PBMers!

Anon, Kirkintilloch, Glasgow

Quite simply, when you start playing a game the GM gives you the next available place – for example, if there's no room in Game 12 you may be placed in Game 13.

From the Mouth of Hell *is a very popular and highly-acclaimed game, though just recently turnaround punctuality has been lapsing and RAMPAGE report that they are offering no more game positions.*

The address for StarGlobe *is:* ***TIME PATTERNS, 97 Devonshire Road, Handsworth Wood, Birmingham B20 2PG*** *– send an SAE for details of the game and the waiting list for startups!!*

BK

MAGS

Dear Brendon,
Are *PBM Magazine* and *Flagship* available in shops, or are they mail-order only?

P Gregory, Portsmouth

A few RPG shops may stock these mags, but it's unlikely. To be sure of getting your copies, write to: PBM Magazine, ***Emjay, 17 Langbank Avenue, Rise Park, Nottingham NG5 5BU*** *(£7.00 for six issues) and* Flagship, ***PO Box 12, Aldridge, Walsall, West Midlands WS9 0TJ*** *(£6.00 for four issues).*

BK

GET ON THE TRIVIA TRAIL!

Ten £100 prizes to be won!

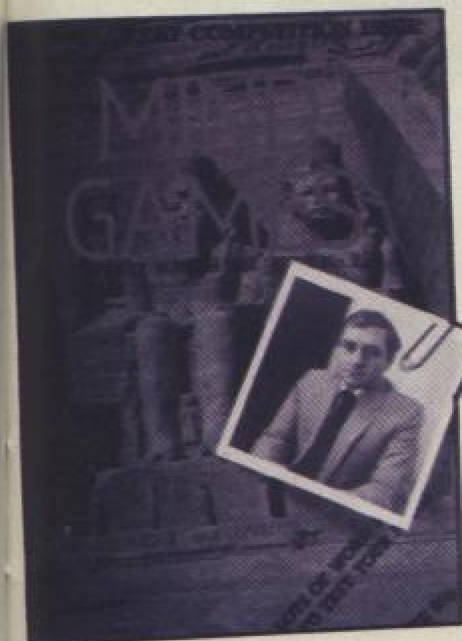
Most people are aware that MENSA exists – 'it's a sort of club for brainy people' is the kind of reply you get to the question 'What's MENSA'. Unless you happen to be talking to Sir Clive Sinclair of course, who is Chairman of British Mensa – or to Harold Gale, the Executive Director based in MENSA's Wolverhampton offices.

MENSA is an elitist organisation – 'You can't deny it,' Harold Gale affirms – and only admits people with an IQ of 148 or over. Theoretically, the top 2 per cent of the population would qualify for membership of **MENSA**, which means there are around 1 million people in the UK whose natural abilities would qualify them for **MENSA** membership. At the moment around 18,000 people have signed up, and the membership rolls, first opened in 1946 by the two barristers who started the club, are growing at the rate of 500 a month.

'**MENSA** is basically a social organisation,' Harold Gale explains, 'and is international in scope. We produce monthly newsletters, and a host of meetings are arranged across the the country which are open to **MENSA** members who get together socially. And of course, if you visit another country there's every chance that there will be a **MENSA** organisation there and as a member you can go along and join their meetings.'

The public face of **MENSA** is associated with puzzles and quizzes that appear in magazines, newspapers and on TV and Radio – often in the form of brainteasers inviting people to apply for membership. **MENSA** is regularly called on to provide the questions (and answers) for competitions run to promote a product or just to entertain readers as well as promoting itself.

Harold Gale, through a company separate to **MENSA**, publishes a puzzle magazine crammed with brainteasers called *MINDGAMES*,



Harold Gale: 'I'm looking forward to seeing what the CRASH readers can do with the program.'

and provides the questions for those video quiz machines that are found in pubs, clubs and in the odd arcade. Harold set up and developed a database to keep track of all the trivia questions he has amassed during the course of his work, and there are now over 30,000 tricky questions nestling on a set of floppy disks stored on his desk.

Given that all the questions and answers were already on a set of disks for the Apricot computer, a few months ago it seemed a logical move to develop an Apricot-based version of the quiz game machines for a Superbrain competition which had been organised. Harold set to, and a collection of IQ style questions were incorporated into a program to run on the Apricot. The software was unveiled at the Superbrain contest, and was used to rank competitors according to the speed and accuracy of their answers.

Perhaps it wasn't too surprising to find that journalists attending the contest spent more time playing the quiz program than they did actually interviewing the contestants . . .

It was clear that the software, apart being a very useful tool when it comes to running Superbrain contests, had potential for entertaining people, so Harold ported it to the IBM format and started selling *Micro Trivia* to users of business machines. The program sold well, and the next move was to prepare a version for the Amstrad PCW wordprocessor. A version was written in compiled Microsoft BASIC, sent out to magazines for review and soon made the software charts without any real publicity.

Harold, as a friend of Sir Clive Sinclair, had been given a ZX81 'to play around with' soon after the machine was launched. 'I thought I ought to have a version of *Micro Trivia* for the Spectrum', he explains, 'but I simply didn't have the time to write it in machine code with all the bells and whistles you would expect to see on a game nowadays.' So a different approach was chosen – the game has been written largely in Sinclair BASIC and is currently being sold in an unprotected form. 'I thought it would be a good idea to use the program as a learning tool for people to pull to pieces and get to grips with programming.'

So the idea of a competition was born – Harold Gale is hereby throwing down the challenge to CRASH readers, and is offering over £1,000 worth of prizes by way of an incentive.

If you want to enter the competition, get hold of a copy of *Micro Trivia*, break into the program and study it. You've got a few months to practise your programming skills and improve upon the software, taking the programming up to the high standard seen on most games released nowadays. Ten people will be rewarded for their efforts, in order of merit, and ten prizes of £100 worth of computer equipment of the winners' choice are on offer. There's also a mystery prize lurking in Harold Gale's office, for the first person to spot the 'deliberate' bug.

A final, polished version of *Micro Trivia* may well be produced once the competition has closed – and if it is your version that's used, royalties will be paid on all sales. . . .

The closing date for receipt of your re-programmed version of *Micro Trivia* is **31 July** – make sure you send your programming masterpiece to **CRASH TRIVIA COMP, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB** before the closing date. And if you're interested in finding out a little more about **MENSA**, drop them a line at the address on the money-off coupon printed here . . .

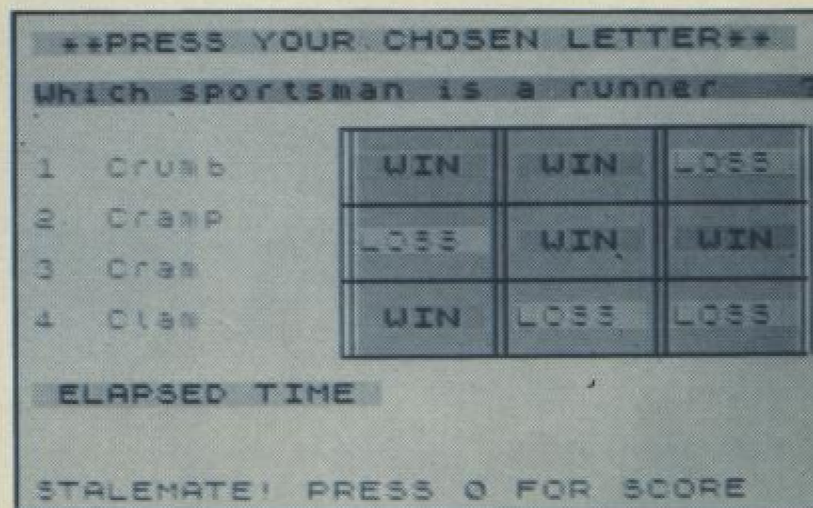
MICRO TRIVIA

The gameplay behind *Micro Trivia* is simple: a three by three grid appears on screen and the player attempts to make a line of three 'win's in the grid, noughts and crosses style, by answering questions correctly. At the start of the game, you're invited to set the time limit that the computer will allow for you to supply an answer for each question, and then the serious play begins.

Acting as quizmaster, the computer allows you to select a square in the grid to go for and then flashes the question onto the top of the screen. Four alternative answers are then offered, and providing you press the correct number key before the time limit expires, you WIN the square. An incorrect answer means that the computer gets to choose the next square. Play continues until a line of three WINs appear on the grid – or until you have 'given' the computer a line of three LOSEs.

At the end of a game the computer assesses your performance, which is related to the time limit you set at the start of the game and the time taken to answer the questions, and prints a suitably rude or contgratulatory message onto the screen.

The basic version of the game includes a total of 1,000 'Pot Luck' questions – two versions of the program are provided, one on each side of the tape, and each contains 500 questions.



STOP PRESS!

MEET VICTOR SEREBRIAKOFF

Victor Serebriakoff, the International President of MENSA, will be handing out the ten prizes to the CRASH programmers who win the *Micro Trivia* competition!

ULTIMATE PLAY THE GAME

PRESENT

JETMAN

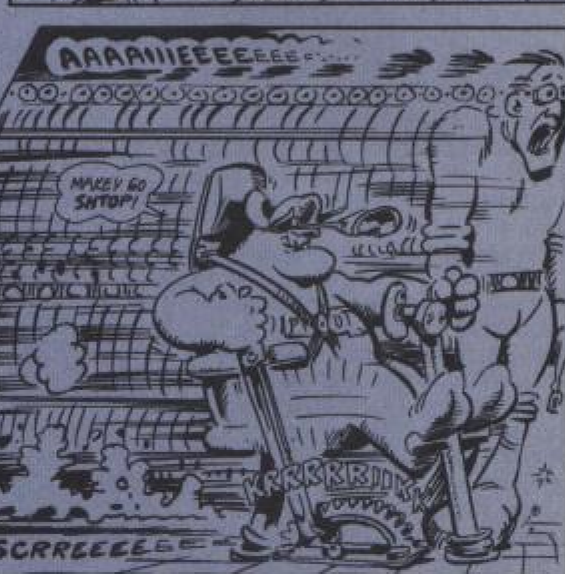
THE MONSTER HAS SWALLOWED THE **EYE OF OKTUP** AN' THOUGHT HE WAS GOING TO DIE... HE NOW KNOWS HE ISN'T... BUT JETMAN THINKS HE IS 'COS JETMAN'S GOING TO DO IT SO'S HE CAN RECOVER THE **EYE**... MEANWHILE, THE SHIP IS ON IT'S WAY TO THE **MONSTERS GRAVEYARD PLANET**... ON AUTOPILOT!!























WOTEVER NEKS ???

Is This Really Auf Wiedersehen Monty?

♪ Ah mole oh meeo ♪

Limited Edition

Just a few lines between continental heists and yet more hairy escapades to say hello to all my fans and invite you on my most exciting and exacting journey to date, a whistle stop tour of the capitals of Europe acquiring more than just the local scenery on the way.

Oops... must dash... gendarmes hot on my tail. Will write again soon with more news of my exhilarating escapades and growing booty bag.

Monty

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To MONTY MOLE FANS EVERYWHERE

I wonder what's on at the ... EN ROUGE'

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Fantastic full colour wall poster only 99p. See pack for details. Poster free with every Auf Wiedersehen Monty purchased at branches of W H Smith

MOLEDAVIA

These squeaking windmoles are driving me mad!

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GREMLIN

Gremlin Graphics Software Limited, Alpha House, 10 Carver Street, Sheffield S1 4FS. Tel: 0742 753423

TOP 30 FOR APRIL

There are seven new entries this month including most notably TOP GUN and the TAU CETI follow-up, ACADEMY, with JACK THE NIPPER and WAY OF THE EXPLODING FIST making reappearances. After last month's barnstorming materialisation of GAUNTLET, it comes as no surprise to see it leap effortlessly to the top slot, pushing PAPERBOY (still holding well) down to number three. But for the rest, the chart remains substantially the same, with the old and newer favourites shuffling positions inconclusively.

First out of the CRASH voting bag for the £40 of Hotline Chart software this month is **D Lambert** *from Coventry. The four runners up are Paul Howard from Enfield, Middlesex, Chris Fried, Leeds, Grant Stephen from Lindfield in West Sussex, and Paul Tinker from Worksop.*

The **HOTLINE AND ADVENTURE CHART** compiled from the votes of CRASH readers is the most realistic chart for gauging the popularity of Spectrum games – it is the games that are being played that get the votes, not the games that are in the shops this week or month.

And the votes are important. It's up to you to let us know what you feel, so fill in the voting forms which live on the RESULTS PAGES and make your voice heard.

If you don't want to carve up your issue of CRASH, we understand. Use a photocopy if you like, or copy the details from the voting forms onto a postcard, or the back of a sealed envelope, and send that to us instead.

Apart from the satisfaction of registering your vote, there's always the chance of winning a prize. Each month we draw ten winners from all the voting forms received – five for the HOTLINE and five for the ADVENTURE chart.

A top prize of £40 worth of software (your choice, not ours) and a CRASH T-shirt is awarded to the first slip drawn from the HOTLINE votes, and another £40 of goodies and a Shirt goes to the Adventure draw winner.

Four runners up from each ballot box collect a CRASH T-shirt and a CRASH Hat. So get those votes in to the **CRASH HOTLINE and CRASH ADVENTURE TRAIL, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB.**

Hotline Top 30

1	(4)	GAUNTLET	US GOLD
2	(7)	COBRA	OCEAN
3	(1)	PAPERBOY	ELITE
4	(3)	URIDIUM	HEWSON
5	(2)	THE GREAT ESCAPE	OCEAN
6	(6)	BOMBJACK	ELITE
7	(11)	ELITE	FIREBIRD
8	(12)	FIRELORD	HEWSON
9	(9)	LIGHTFORCE	FTL
10	(15)	STARGLIDER	FIREBIRD
11	(5)	MATCH DAY	OCEAN
12	(19)	TRAPDOOR	PIRANHA
13	(8)	GHOSTS AND GOBLINS	ELITE
14	(10)	COMMANDO	ELITE
15	(20)	TRIVIAL PURSUIT	DOMARK
16	(14)	SCOOBY DOO	ELITE
17	(16)	SPACE HARRIER	ELITE
18	(-)	TOP GUN	OCEAN
19	(29)	HEAVY ON THE MAGICK	GARGOYLE
20	(17)	GREEN BERET	IMAGINE
21	(-)	ACADEMY	CRL
22	(25)	BATMAN	OCEAN
23	(-)	JACK THE NIPPER	GREMLIN GRAPHICS
24	(18)	DAN DARE	VIRGIN
25	(-)	TERRA CRESTA	IMAGINE
26	(28)	DANDY	ELECTRIC DREAMS
27	(-)	WAY OF EXPLODING FIST	MELBOURNE H
28	(-)	FEUD	MASTERTRONIC
29	(-)	TURBO ESPRIT	DURELL
30	(27)	1942	ELITE

Adventure Top 30

the Crash CHARTS

It suffered a slight setback last month, but HEAVY ON THE MAGICK is back at the top again – for its seventh month at number one. Seven new entries here too, with MINDSHADOW coming in highest, and some friendly reappearances from other quarters. February's surprise appearance of FRANKIE GOES TO HOLLYWOOD seems to have been a freak of nature or the chart system, for it's vanished again! In the main, though, few real changes, reflecting a contentment with the same games.

The winner of this month's £40 worth of Adventure Chart software is **Nigel Harold**, *from Mapledurwell in Hampshire. The four runners up are Jefferson White from Greenhead, Cumbria; Rodney Tregale from Slough, Berks; Chris Wilson from Gateshead, Tyne and Wear and Trevor J Shelley, Saltburn, Cleveland.*

Adventure Top 30

1	*(4)*	**HEAVY ON THE MAGICK**	GARGOYLE GAMES
2	*(3)*	**THE BOGGIT**	CRL
3	*(6)*	**SPELLBOUND**	M A D GAMES
4	*(12)*	**BORED OF THE RINGS**	SILVERSOFT
5	*(11)*	**KNIGHT TYME**	M A D GAMES
6	*(20)*	**LORD OF THE RINGS**	MELBOURNE HOUSE
7	*(26)*	**THE HOBBIT**	MELBOURNE HOUSE
8	*(15)*	**FAIRLIGHT**	THE EDGE
9	*(28)*	**GREMLINS**	ADVENTURE INTERNATIONAL
10	*(24)*	**LORDS OF MIDNIGHT**	BEYOND
11	*(30)*	**SHERLOCK**	MELBOURNE HOUSE
12	*(2)*	**FAIRLIGHT 2**	THE EDGE
13	*(27)*	**SHADOWFIRE**	BEYOND
14	*(5)*	**PRICE OF MAGIK**	LEVEL 9
15	*(–)*	**MINDSHADOW**	ACTIVISION
16	*(8)*	**RED MOON**	LEVEL 9
17	*(13)*	**MINDSTONE**	THE EDGE
18	*(23)*	**ENIGMA FORCE**	BEYOND
19	*(14)*	**DUN DARACH**	GARGOYLE GAMES
20	*(–)*	**SWORDS & SORCERY**	PSS
21	*(18)*	**MARSPORT**	GARGOYLE GAMES
22	*(22)*	**SPIDERMAN**	ADVENTURE INTERNATIONAL
23	*(–)*	**DRACULA**	CRL
24	*(–)*	**KAYLETH**	US GOLD
25	*(9)*	**SEABASE DELTA**	FIREBIRD
26	*(12)*	**HAMPSTEAD**	MELBOURNE HOUSE
27	*(1)*	**WORM IN PARADISE**	LEVEL 9
28	*(–)*	**VERA CRUZ**	INFOGAMES
29	*(–)*	**A JEWEL OF DARKNESS**	LEVEL 9
30	*(–)*	**PAWN**	RAINBIRD



Ian Craig ©

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BECOME A DOC-MARTENED SUPERHERO, JUST LIKE MR KIDD

Crash Competition

In The Very First CRASH Footwear Comp!

40 Copies of BAZOOKA BILL on Offer

Bazooka Bill is a really hard soldier, well tough. Which is why he was selected for the mission to rescue General MacArthur who has been captured by rebels and spirited away to their tropical hideaway. It's up to you to help Bill find the General who's been taken to a tropical island.

Scampering along platforms and leaping from ledge to ledge, Bill has to deal with the running dog lackeys who captured the brave general, dealing death and destruction with his fists and feet until he comes across a weapon abandoned by one of his vanquished opponents. Picking up a weapon dropped by a fleeing terrorist increases Bill's combat abilities quite considerably for a while, making his task of trouncing the terrorists that bit easier.

Mr Kidd reckons he's every bit as hard as Bazooka Bill – and all because he wears Doctor Marten's Boots! Leaping into the office first thing in the morning in a pair of size ten Cherry Reds, our beloved Editor sproings around amongst the litter left in the office by the Spiky Haired Terrors in the ZZAP! office, issuing orders left right and centre. He's not averse to clouting yours truly, or delivering a well-aimed toe in the direction of my posterior if he catches me 'slacking' as he puts it. (I don't reckon that a ten-minute kip in the Broom Cupboard after trudging up the Ludlow hills with sacks and sacks of competition mail is slacking, but there's no arguing with Mr K.)

Now MELBOURNE HOUSE are offering a lucky CRASH reader the chance to emulate some of the exploits of Mr Kidd. The top prize in this competition is no less than a pair of Cherry Red Doc Martens (brand new, but as worn by our Ed) and a pair of combat trousers (also brand new, as worn by Bazooka Bill), as well as a CRASH T-shirt (probably new). By way of consolation, 40 runners-up are set to collect a copy of *Bazooka Bill*, the game.

Study the wordsquare that appears on this page, shuffle through the letters until you find all the words you have to find (they're dotted around the place) and then ring them round, complete the coupon and whizz your entry in to BAZOOKA BILL'S TROUSERS, CRASH, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB making sure it arrives by 30th April.

S	O	O	N	R	D	S	D	N	A	L	S	I	
C	U	M	U	Z	A	E	I	H	T	E	N	O	
B	S	T	H	O	L	N	D	S	R	T	L	U	
I	E	E	N	R	U	O	B	L	E	M	I	G	
T	R	A	L	A	L	T	R	A	M	A	K	H	
S	A	L	C	L	A	O	O	Z	A	P	Y	E	
S	I	M	I	T	H	A	I	R	E	D	G	D	
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G	E	M	R	O	D	A	S	P	I	K	Y	P	
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A	T	Z	I	T	I	R	A	E	L	O	O	K	
M	A	T	P	P	Y	M	E	L	B	O	U	R	
B	M	I	S	N	E	T	R	A	M	C	O	D	

MELBOURNE HOUSE
SPIKY HAIRED ONES
BAZOOKA BILL
DOC MARTENS
TOUGH GUY
ISLAND

NAME ....

ADDRESS ....

....

.... POST CODE ....

FOOT SIZE .... WAIST SIZE .... INSIDE LEG ...

SKY RUNNER

Producer: Cascade
Retail Price: **£9.95**
Author: **Orpheus**

Four hundred years have passed since our time. Space travel has become economic, now Man can pass cheaply across distant unknown space, and make it his own. And with each new planet colonised, hopes of peace, freedom, and equality grew like seedlings in Men's minds.

But these seeds withered and died, as the rich became richer, and the poor, poorer. Anger and discontent grew amongst the masses, crime flourished. In desperation, governments used drugs to quash unruly elements – but their use also squashed vitality. After twenty years crime was dying, but industrial production had virtually ceased and worlds slid toward economic ruin. Until that is, the discovery, and settlement, of the planet Naibmoloc.

Naibmoloc was a good world, and when it was discovered that from its forests could be refined a powerful control drug, without side effects, Naibmoloc became a very good world indeed.

A secret government department was established to recruit harvesters, processors and smugglers of the new drug. A drug they now called Sky. And from its name the agents took theirs. The Sky Runners began to work.

Whispered words reached planetary governments, who knew nothing of the control drug experiments. Determined to end this moral outrage they organised rebel Runner Squads of mercenaries, to disrupt and sabotage the Sky Runner's operations.

Mother ships have laid rebel Skimmers into the planet's atmosphere. Armed and fast, they are specially adapted to destroy the defence towers surrounding the harvesting lands. You are a pilot of one such Skimmer. The screen before you shows a view from the Skimmer's cockpit, and the threat level the Skimmer is likely to encounter – which you can evaluate. The balance of your mercenary's fees is indicated, as fighting becomes fiercer, every successful mission adds bonus payments of increasing value to that account.

After an automatic take off, the Skimmer can be guided, accelerated or slowed. Tall harvesting towers appear, and all must be destroyed before stopping the Skimmer and dropping three SkyBikers it carries, down to the forest floor. Now control passes to a Sky Biker who can be steered



Almost fully powered, the Sky Runner heads towards the forest.

through the forest trees in search of his enemy counterparts, whose positions can be seen on the scanner at the top of the screen. They attack from all directions, and fast manoeuvring is required to avoid their shots while lining up to deliver killing blasts. Some enemies carry a price upon their heads and disabling them earns a bonus. Your Pulse Blaster switches to a low level when a wanted biker is confronted. One shot disables, two shots kill, the blaster indicating when to fire.

But not all SkyBikers encountered are enemies, some are fellow-rebels, and penalties are incurred for killing them.

After the last opposing SkyBiker has been destroyed the Harvesters can be attacked, with high energy pulses to vulnerable points indicated upon their sides. When the last Sky Harvester is wiped out, the battle for Naibmoloc, and its evil drug economy is won.





CRITICISM

● **" Hands up who remembers** Death Chase ... **I do and it's a damn sight better than this, and, thanks to ELITE, it's a lot cheaper too. Okay, so there are a few extra bits but they're pretty dull, instantly forgettable even. The graphics are reasonable, but they tend to get messy and there isn't really enough variation. The sound's run-of-the-mill, a bog-standard engine noise and a sort of crunch when you prang. I can't recommend this, it simply isn't worth ten pounds. "**

BEN

● " Sky Runner *isn't one of the easiest games to get used to. For a start you don't actually have to hit any of the defence towers accurately, just land a bolt in the proximity. The bikers haven't got the world's best collision detection on them either. Sometimes bolts go straight through without making any impact at all. However, the graphics are original and extremely well drawn, updating without flicker, and their action is silky smooth. Even though* Sky Runner *is hard to play I found it to be great fun and surprisingly addictive. Definitely worth a look at, even if you think it's not your cup of tea. "*

PAUL

● " A pretty basic sort of shoot 'em up, this. Graphically, it's unamazing; I feel the SkyBikers could be improved, and the harvester isn't particularly hot; the 3D effect works, but is a bit jerky. Whereas there's quite a lot of playability present, I think its addictive qualities are sorely lacking. Having progressed through the three levels, the towers, the bikers, and finally the harvester, there's little compulsion to try the run again, even on one of the higher threat levels. CASCADE seem to have made an effort with this one, but it lacks the addictiveness of *ACE*. "

MIKE

COMMENTS

Control keys: cursor keys and Space to fire
Joystick: Kempston, Interface 2, Cursor
Use of colour: average
Graphics: neatly drawn, of reasonable size with good animation
Sound: average, tendency to be irritating after a while
Screens: three scrolling stages
General rating: An old idea rehashed with only the graphics offering anything really new, but resulting in an above average shoot 'em up.

Presentation	68%
Graphics	65%
Playability	64%
Addictive qualities	62%
Value for money	63%
Overall	64%

INTO THE EAGLE'S NEST

Producer: Pandora
Retail Price: **£8.95**
Author: **K Parker and R Chapman**

High on a mountainside in Central Europe, a castle clings to its rocky foundation. An imposing fortress, the Eagle's Nest is important to the enemy – it's also vital to you. As a saboteur, you have just entered the stronghold, your mission has two aims – to infiltrate and blow up the castle, and to rescue fellow saboteurs held prisoner within it. You decide which is the most important.

The castle is divided into corridors and rooms on two different levels, with a connecting lift. The view is from above, looking down on the saboteur as you move him left and right, up and down, along corridors and through rooms. An increasing number of locked doors are encountered the deeper into the Eagle's Nest you go. But the necessary keys are to be found scattered randomly about the castle's rooms.

Being a temporary barracks, German squaddies swarm about the place, and when encountered, they fire off shots capable of wounding, and eventually killing – the number of shots that drill your on-screen body are displayed on the right. With 50 hits your fighting days are over. There's a plus point though, picking up the first-aid kits found about about the castle extends the saboteur's life – in fact, it's quite amazing what a bit of sticking plaster can heal.

You're armed with a rifle which can be used either to kill enemies, or to shoot doors open. To stop soldiers, a single or double shot may be needed depending on the skill level chosen, but one shot is always sufficient to blast open a door. And it's always better to hide behind a wall and shoot around corners. However, ammunition is limited and must be replenished from time to time. Extra bullets are collected from stores found about the castle. Simply touching ammunition collects it, and can restore you to a full complement of 99 rounds. Monitor how much ammunition remains by watching the right-hand display. If stray bullets hit an explosive dump your life is in danger, one hit merely opens an explosive box, but a second destroys – both it . . . and you.

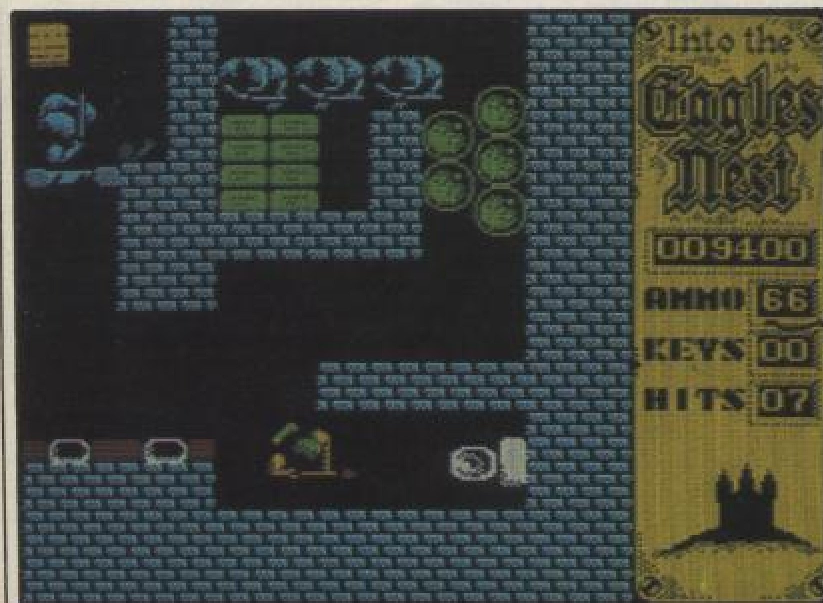
Much sabotage work has already been carried out by the men you are rescuing; they were captured before completing their task. If the explosive charges which they laid are found, they can be set off, and when a detonator has been activated it needs a quick getaway to escape the blast.

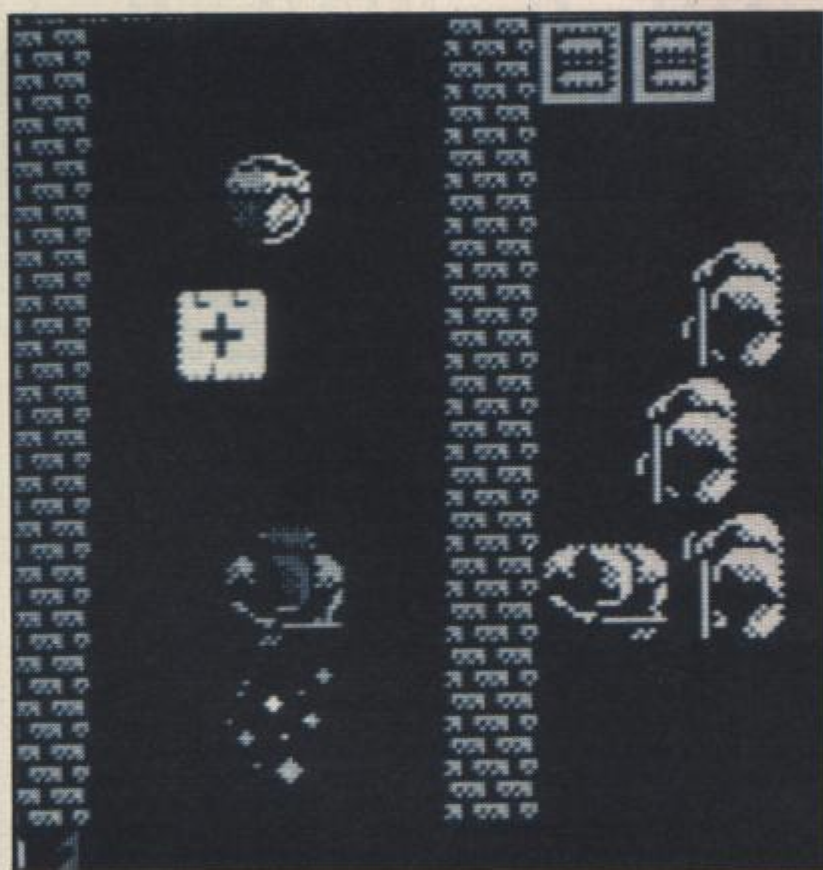
With this accomplished, the prime object of your mission has been achieved. But remember your secondary objective, to rescue and escape with your captured fellow sabs. When you have freed them from their prison cells, you become their leader and they follow you. But to survive they must be protected, thus complicating an already difficult mission.

And then there's your commanding officer – he's an art lover and wants you to recover stolen antiquities and jewels from the castle. Some of these have been left in obvious places by the slovenly Germans, but others are hidden in ammunition boxes.

Blowing up castles, rescuing prisoners and carrying works of art is pretty hard work, even for the best trained of agents. When physical and nervous exhaustion set in, food must be eaten to save you from severe fatigue. Look out for the plates of nosh, and simply touch them to eat. With this all done, you can trudge back to the secret rendezvous pick-up point, happy in the knowledge that you've had another successful day at the office.

Cameron guides the hero towards the loo. What is he thinking of? – there's captives to be rescued!





CRITICISM

● **" What a great game . . . I'm well impressed, it has everything a good game should have, a good plot, marvellous graphics and sound and excellent gameplay. Stomping around the multiple levels, blasting away at 'Jerry' is great fun and I'm sure it will be for weeks to come. The graphics are large and well detailed, this gives the impression that the screen is uncluttered – even when there are loads of characters visible. There are plenty of sound effects, but also a horrible droning alarm noise on the title screen which is annoying. On the whole I feel that** Into the Eagle's Nest **is a touch overpriced, but worth it. "**

BEN

● *" Yet another* Gauntlet *game . . . Yawn!! At least* Into to Eagle's Nest *contains something to do, unlike most of the trudge around type games, and it outscores* Gauntlet *on one important point – graphics. Most impulse buying will take place by looking at the screen pictures on the front of the inlay, which is a pity as the game is nowhere near as addictive or playable as* Gauntlet. *The slow scrolling gets on your nerves after a short while. I loved all the little features like the toilets and dinner tables but these are just scenery of little importance in playing the game. A very attractive game and certainly worth looking at. "*

PAUL

● " If *Pandora* can keep the standard of their releases as high as this, then they surely have a successful future ahead of them. The graphics in *Into The Eagle's Nest* are excellent, although occasional flickers are noticeable on some of the characters. The 'tune' (note the inverted commas!) on the title screen is awful; after more than a couple of minutes, it really begins to grind on the nerves. But it's playable and addictive, with stacks of room to stomp around blasting everyone and everything. Worth getting as it represents good value for money. "

MIKE

COMMENTS

Control keys: definable, four direction and fire
Joystick: Kempston, Interface 2, Cursor
Use of colour: bright and attractive
Graphics: large, detailed and smooth
Sound: good spot FX, title tune
Skill levels: two
Screens: large scrolling play area
General rating: Perhaps better looking than playing, this is still a first rate game with some original touches.

Presentation	80%
Graphics	85%
Playability	85%
Addictive qualities	78%
Value for money	79%
Overall	82%

SIGMA SEVEN

Producer: Durell
Retail Price: **£7.95**
Author: **Mike Richardson**

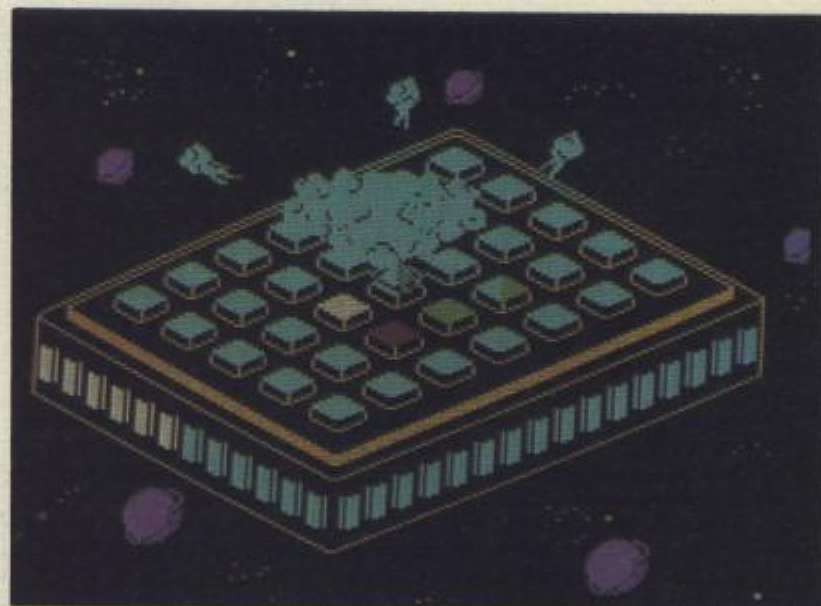
What happens when one of those robotised factories floating around in space is no longer needed? After all, a man in Earth Head Office can hardly reach out to an instrument panel and press an 'off' button . . . for one thing the factories are over 100,000 light years away. Worse still, they were constructed with an in-built protection system, designed specifically to stop rival companies shutting them down. No, the only way companies can silence these obsolete hulks is by employing men like you (a free-lance Robot Factory Deactivator) to roam the Universe in your compact space fighter, shutting them down as it becomes necessary.

Deactivating a factory involves the completion of three different tasks. First, the factory's automatic defence system has to be negotiated. The screen scrolls diagonally as the fighter approaches the factory and defensive mines home in kamikaze-style, attempting to destroy what they consider to be a hostile intruder. There are three back-up craft, one of which is lost if these mines strike home. The fighter moves left and right to avoid the onslaught, and shoot bursts of laser fire which destroy the mines. Travelling far enough into the defence system brings you to the factory where the fighter automatically lands.

Next the factory floor must be cleared of 'power dots', using a remote control drone. The screen displays a 3D forced perspective view of the factory's interior which scrolls as the drone moves along the power dot filled tracks. You can't fall off the path, but crashing into one of the drones trundling around the maze-like system loses another reserve craft. The dots are cleared by travelling over them, and when enough are erradicated, the score display flashes. The drone can then be moved to either end of the factory to complete the screen.

During the clearing period some of the dots are impossible to pick up – these form a pattern which must be remembered if the third and final stage is to be completed. A panel appears containing a series of buttons. Using these, the pattern revealed in the previous stage must be recreated. This is achieved by bouncing a suspended ball on the correct buttons. This task is made more difficult by a defence force field which slowly follows your movements across the slab – if the ball is dropped onto a button guarded by the force field, another craft is lost. A button can only be activated if it's flashing yellow – any other colour and the ball has no effect.

When this puzzle is negotiated and the correct pattern inserted, the factory is considered shut down. Bonus points are awarded and you are automatically moved on to the next, more hazardous factory. The action continues in this fashion until your supply of ships runs out.



Fatal results, as Cameron fails to solve a singularly tricky puzzle.

CRITICISM

● " DURELL **seem to be slipping –** Deep Strike **was less than pleasing, and this is a bit iffy too. At first** Sigma 7 **is compelling, but once you've got the hang of all three levels it proves to be far too easy – so monotony sets in quickly. The gameplay may appeal to high score bandits but I doubt it will keep most gamesplayers happy for long. The graphics are fairly impressive, there's always a lot of colour on screen and the characters themselves have been nicely drawn. The front end is excellent, the game logo flicks up beautifully at every given opportunity, and there's a brilliant 48K tune. "**

BEN

● *" I suppose that when you've released as many superb games as* DURELL *have you're bound to get a few duff cookies.* Sigma 7 *is a GREAT disappointment. The graphics are very solid but not very well drawn, and there's appalling colour clash on the first stage. The animation is simple and not very effective – the first stage suffers terribly from flickers and jerks. One good thing is the tune on the title screen. But that's about it. There's nothing in any of the stages that's fun to play.* Sigma 7 *is not worth the asking price on its own. "*

PAUL

● " I really enjoyed this at first. It took me a while to understand the objective of the third screen, but once I had it sussed it became very, very easy. Within half an hour I was regularly amassing 20 or 25 lives every game . . . and losing them all a few levels later. Needless to say, I found this extremely frustrating, and therefore the addictive qualities I originally foresaw vanished in a puff of smoke. On its own, *Sigma 7* isn't much of a game, but DURELL's drop in price is a sensible move – and as it now seems that they're offering a 'buy one get one free' policy (and we're talking games like *Thanatos* and *Fat Worm* here, not yer usual freebie rubbish!!), *Sigma 7* represents good value. "

MIKE



" Hmmmm. I really think that Durell could have made this a little more interesting on the 128/plus 2. Surely adding another level or some other extra bit of gameplay wouldn't havecaused the programmers too much trouble – and it would have made the enhanced version a lot more playable.

The music is simply a slightly more tuneful version of the already impressive 48K soundtrack. The sound effects during the game are the only vastly noticeable improvement on the 128 – it sounds like a good shoot 'em up should. I wouldn't strongly recommend it over its 48K version as the changes are minimal. "

COMMENTS

Control keys: definable, preset: A/Z up/down, N/M left/right, Space to fire
Joystick: Kempston, Interface 2, Cursor
Use of colour: colour clashes abound, but they're forgiveable given the amount of on-screen colour
Graphics: Badly animated characters, and annoying flicking on second screen
Sound: Good title tune, and plenty of boring effects
Skill levels: one
Screens: three stages, scrolling
General rating: A disappointment from Durell, maybe this should have been the freebie!

Presentation	79%
Graphics	71%
Playability	58%
Addictive qualities	55%
Value for money	66%
Overall	62%

"... Like a rubber ball, come bouncin' back to me-a-he-he ..." (with thanks to Kim Wilde's dad).

53

I, B·A·L·L

BUDGET



You have entered the strange and peculiar space-world of the Balls. In this two-dimensional place live a race of multi-coloured ball-people, quite content to bounce from day to day. But all is not well in this haven of rotundity. The evil Terry Ball has captured, Lover Ball, Eddy Ball, Glowball, and No Ball and is threatening to deflate them. In fact the only Ballboy left around is I, Ball, and he alone can save his compatriots from puncture.

To do so there are 16 screens to negotiate, each made up of an obstacle course of metallic denture sets, angular metallic structures, blocks arranged in steps and rotating crosses. As I, Ball picks his way through a world resembling a lunatic scrap-metal merchant's yard, he's attacked and bombarded by lethal devices unleashed by the evil Mr Ball – micro wave ovens, crabs, roulette wheels and Polo mints come after him thick and fast. At first some of these devices present no danger, but soon they lose their benevolence and become lethal. Now, failure to avoid or destroy them means I, Ball loses a life with every contact.

I, Ball is a resilient little bouncer though, blessed with four lives with which to rescue his friends. And for defence there's a bubble-gun that sprays opponents with destructive force. However it only blows bubbles vertically, making I, Ball vulnerable to attack from devices that follow like evil puppy-dogs in his wake. The gun overheats with prolonged use and has to cool down before it fires effectively again.

On occasions a chance to acquire a power disc is presented. By touching a disc I, Ball can increase his range of weapons and abilities – turbo boost allows greater movement speed through a section, while single- and twin-lasers shoot attackers to the sides. Not only weapons, but extra scores and extended time are awarded when a power disc is taken. A status panel shows which weapons are currently in I, Ball's possession. Unfortunately, power discs can be destroyed by the bubble-gun, and when that happens, the weapon or feature it offers is also lost. Some power discs are faulty, picking one up means that the last gathered weapon is lost.

The computer gives verbal encouragement, throaty congratulations greet each new level achieved, and rasping commiserations blast each loss of life. I, Ball's friends are imprisoned at regular intervals, simply reaching the correct level ensures their release. But speed is essential if he's to get through each section before the countdown runs to zero.

CRITICISM

" It's hard, very hard, but I, Ball is immensely enjoyable. It's almost like a vertically scrolling version of Nemesis in the way that your armoury is built up as the game progresses. Graphically very detailed, every character has its own cute features, and the animation, which is some of the smoothest I've seen for a long time, sets them off magnificently. The speech, which is quite recognisable, is best heard through an amplifier as the old squeaker muffles it somewhat. Simply, I, Ball is a fast, furious and highly addictive game that is well worth two quid of anyone's money. "

RICHARD

CRITICISM

" Well, well, well, what a fine little game this is. Although highly-coloured, the excellent graphics suffer hardly any attribute clash, and the scrolling is almost perfect. Sound is marvellous, with a quite bearable tune on the title, jazzy FX and some nifty speech (surely that isn't the legendary Fuigey who's been digitised)?! It undoubtedly becomes more fun when you get loads of add-ons for your ball, but even with the rock-bottom turbo-boost (even without it!), I, Ball is a great game, full of playability and addictiveness, and one that improves as you get better at it; there are some REALLY frustrating layouts on the higher levels. For the standard Firebird budget price, it's probably the best value game I've played this month. "

MIKE

CRITICISM

" Despite the overly cute scenario and the distinct lack of any instructions I, Ball has got me hooked and I can't see myself putting it away for a long while. At first the action is too fast, so it's a bit confusing, but once you've got the hang of how everything on screen behaves, it all becomes fairly straightforward. The graphics are excellent, each character is large, colourful and well defined and the background scrolls smoothly. The sound is also very good; the ace tune on the title screen is bettered by the astounding effects and speech during the game. For two quid this is a steal – go geddit! "

BEN

Producer: Firebird
Retail Price: **£1.99**

Ball continues his perilous upwards struggle to defeat the evil Terry Ball

COMMENTS

Control keys: Z/X left/right, O/K up/down, P to fire
Joystick: Kempston, Interface 2
Use of colour: excellent
Graphics: large, well-defined and smooth
Sound: good tunes and spot FX, recognisable speech
Skill levels: one
Screens: 16 stages
General rating: A great little game with plenty of lasting appeal.

Presentation	87%
Graphics	86%
Playability	86%
Addictive qualities	89%
Value for money	93%
Overall	**90%**



UCHI MATA

Producer: Martech
Retail Price: **£8.95**
Author: **Beechnut**

Oriental martial arts have been around for centuries. Karate, Tai-Kwon-Do, Kung Fu and Kendo all rely on strength and dexterity with some form of weapon, ranging from rice flails to a clenched fist. However, the well known present day derivative of Ju-Jitsu – Judo – differs from other forms of self defence in that no weapons are used at all. Instead of bashing the living daylights out of an opponent, Judo relies solely on the participant using his opponent's strength and weight to his own advantage.

Uchi Mata offers you the chance to throw either a computer or human controlled opponent around the screen in a series of bouts, scoring points in much the same way as Brian Jacks would in a live contest. Each bout is played over two minutes and points are scored by successfully throwing the opposition.

Throws are executed by moving the joystick in more than one direction, utilising a sort of sweeping action. However, before your opponent can be thrown you have to get a good grip, by quickly pressing the fire button when in range. When a successful grip has been made, a 'grip light' is displayed to signal that you must attempt to perform a throw. If a move is not executed as soon as the grip light appears, then another attempt has to be made at gaining a good grip.

Once a throw has been performed, the referee appears in the top right hand corner of the screen with his hand outstretched to indicate how many points have been awarded for the throw. Either three, five, seven or ten points are given, depending on how your opponent lands. If you manage to perform a perfect throw, ie: the opposition lands flat on his back, then a full ten points are awarded and the bout is over. Otherwise, the player with the most points is declared the winner when the time limit expires.

Whenever a move is made by an attacking player, the defending player can counter it if he is fast enough. If the defending player is actually thrown, then a quick wiggle on the joystick in the right direction will have him landing on his feet.

Only four major moves are provided in the instructions, but by using the training option it is possible to discover undocumented throws and practice defensive moves.

CRITICISM

● **" I've always thought that Judo was a bit boring, you can't punch or kick so mindless violence is sadly left on the shelf. It's just a matter of getting your opponent off balance and then throwing him half way across the room. MARTECH's simulation does nothing to change my views on this martial art. The strange control method's a good idea, although there are problems. You never really get the feeling that the complicated wiggle you've just carried out on your joystick has had anything to do with your character flinging his opponent over his shoulder. Playing on the keys or with a cumbersome joystick is next to impossible because you simply can't access the various movements quickly enough. Despite all this I found** Uchi Mata **quite appealing for a short time – once you've mastered the controls it's a simple beat 'em up. "**

BEN

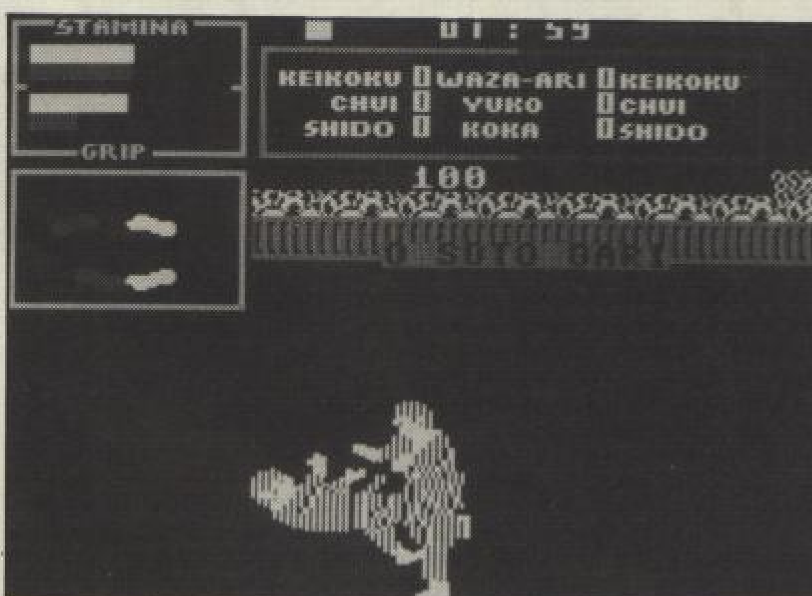
● *" Goodness gracious me, by golly! What a complete mess of a game* Uchi Mata *has turned out to be. This must be one of the most unplayable games ever on the Spectrum. MARTECH's latest offering is absolutely impossible to play on the keyboard and not much more fun with a joystick. The flickery graphics are appalling, there shouldn't be any excuse for this. Sound is non-existent. If you ignore the flicker, however, it's possible to see that the moves are very well executed, and feature some superb leg sweeps and throws. If you run off the end of the screen, you may notice that your body disappears, only leaving you hands! Definitely a disappointment. "*

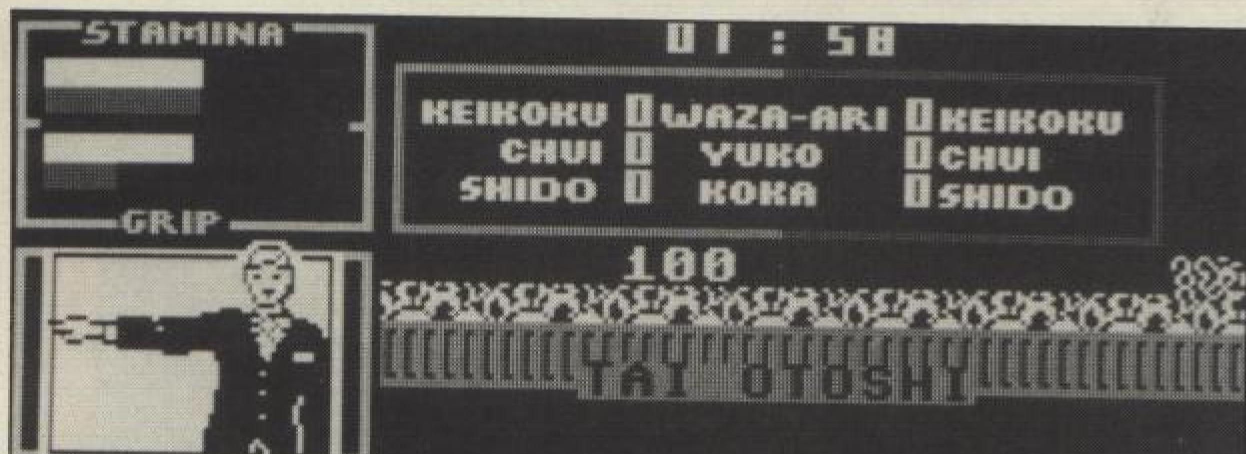
PAUL

● " A promising product – not just another martial arts game – *Uchi Mata* appeared to offer a bit more than your average beat 'em up. However, the manner in which it has been executed leaves a lot to be desired. The animation is hideously flickery, especially the way the characters are constantly updated. The graphics themselves are adequate but I'm confused by the way shading is used – vertically rather than diagonally, as the old technique always appeared to work much better. The method in which the moves are executed is novel. Using the joystick to simulate the moves themselves; but, again, originality is not always the best ploy – a single key press for a throw seems easier to me. If you can bear the annoying graphics and handle the peculiar control system then *Uchi Mata* might be worth considering, but don't expect to be bowled over. "

RICHARD

A mere minute and fifty-nine seconds into the bout, and our black belt in Judo, Cameron-san, performs a Soto Gari.





COMMENTS

Control keys: Q/A and O/P for movement, Space to execute a throw
Joystick: Kempston, Interface 2, Cursor
Use of colour: pretty scoreboard, monochrome playing area
Graphics: extremely flickery and jerky
Sound: poor
Skill levels: one
Screens: one playing area
General rating: There's some playability there, but it's spoiled by its graphics and playing control.

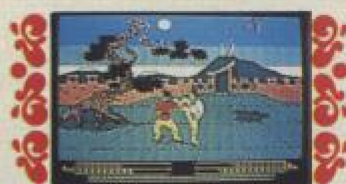
Presentation	56%
Graphics	38%
Playability	35%
Addictive qualities	36%
Value for money	33%
Overall	36%

Only the honourable will Survive the bloody conflict of

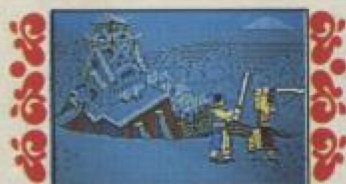
SAMURAI TRILOGY

SUPERB 24" x 16" FINE ART PRINT OFFER SEE PACK FOR DETAILS.

In an age in which honour was revered, from a time when grace and beauty were virtues, a class of warriors set themselves apart to dedicate their lives to a perfection in combat that in itself was an artform, to a discipline of mind that became a religion. The attaining of such excellence required an extraordinary diligence in selfdenial and training in order to achieve the ultimate accolade 'War Lord'. Kendo, Karate and finally Samurai are the tests that must be mastered before such honour can be bestowed.







Gremlin Graphics Software Ltd.,
Alpha House, 10 Carver Street, Sheffield
Tel: 0742 753423



Amstrad £9.99 tape, £14.99 disk
CBM64/128 £9.99 tape, £14.99 disk
Spectrum £7.99 tape

ANFRACTUOS

Producer: Players
Retail Price: **£1.99**
Authors: **Andy and Martin Severn**

In a far distant solar system there lies a small planet, with a death sentence hanging high above it in the skies. Once a thriving mining community, Anfractuos now orbits an unstable sun that is soon to explode. All humans have been evacuated, and the mines left to decay and fill with water.

In the mad race to leave this doomed world, a mining droid called Tobor has been left behind to fend for itself. If it's ever to escape, the droid must board the planet's last remaining shuttle and blast off into space. The main problem is that the shuttle is without rocket fuel, and therefore eight cans of that precious liquid must be found and collected before he can leave. So, with the instinct for survival flowing strongly through his circuitry, the droid sets off into the depths of the mining world to begin his search.

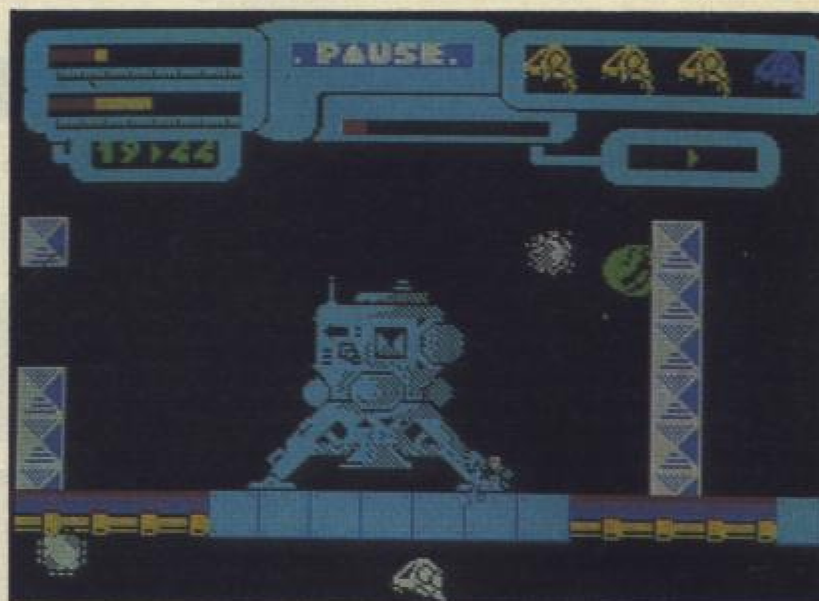
Anfractuos mining base is made up of a series of multi-level tunnels connected by lifts and shafts. The droid jets up or floats down shafts, but must take care when using lifts – some are unreliable due to lack of maintenance, whilst others have no lower exit.

Tobor may be without human companionship, but he is certainly not alone. Creatures made up of negative energy particles live on Anfractuos, and they are as unfriendly as they are unusual. Contact with these causes Tobor's limited energy reserves to be drained. To protect itself Tobor can attempt to avoid them, or shoot and kill the creatures, but as they are a protected species points are deducted for their destruction. Should Tobor's energy levels fall low, he becomes unable to jet upwards, and one of his four lives is lost if they fall to zero.

Whilst the droid can lose energy he can also replenish it. There are energy cubicles dotted about the planet, and by entering one Tobor's energy is rejuvenated. Points are awarded for the number of remaining droids and the extent of energy reserves at the end of the game.

Even if Tobor manages to collect the eight fuel cans, maintain his energy level and make his way to the shuttle launch zone, his task is still not complete. When the shuttle has been re-fuelled it is almost ready for blast-off, but first the four switches that retain it must be found and put out of commission. The shuttle's countdown then commences, and there is now limited time for the droid to enter the shuttle and blast off. If Tobor is not fast enough the shuttle takes off without him, leaving the poor little droid to end his days in the heat and horror of a supernova.



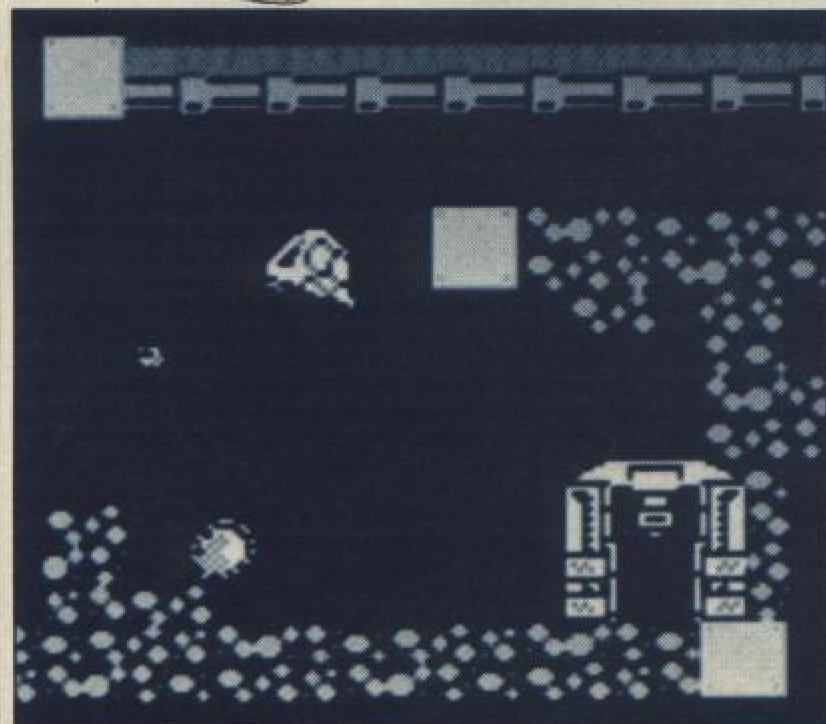


Tired out by his furious search, our hero takes a breather alongside the landing craft.

CRITICISM

● **" I've got the feeling that the programmers treated** Anfrac**tuos like a demo rather than a game – it certainly looks like one, there's a scrolling message, and raster lines have been shoved in at every possible opportunity. The gameplay suffers severely, probably due to very little or no play-testing. The action is marred by the constant threat of the game resetting, and parts of the map are decidedly dodgy. If you're a masochistic games player or you want to see your Spectrum doing something pretty then perhaps this is worth a couple of pounds – but I wouldn't really recommend it. "**

BEN



● " *Anfractuos is a strange piece of budget software, and it would probably have been quite good if there wasn't so many seemingly impossible locations. The individual characters are well drawn, but it's strange that the aliens don't have any collision detection, and very odd when they go back and forth through borders which you aren't allowed to cross. Perhaps* PLAYERS*' next game will establish them in the budget market – but so far I've seen nothing of quality from them.* Anfractuos *is bare and unaddictive, and soon becomes quite boring.* "

PAUL

● " As if there weren't enough budget arcade adventures on the market already, **PLAYERS** had to go and add another one to our already expansive collection – and unfortunately for them, *Anfractuos* is one contribution I can certainly do without. It's playable enough for the first few minutes, but that's when the lack of addictiveness starts to pull at your nerves – and having to abort because you get stuck is one of the most frustrating glitches that any game can incorporate, and it happens plenty of times here. **PLAYERS** have got a pretty poor sort of game on their hands here, and I wouldn't recommend it – even for a couple of quid. "

MIKE

COMMENTS

Control keys: Q/W left/right, O for jet, I for fire
Joystick: Kempston, Interface 2
Use of colour: lots of background colours
Graphics: particularly attractive characters, although fairly small
Sound: lots of spot effects
Skill levels: one
Screens: one vast map
General rating: Could have been improved by some rigorous play-testing, as it stands it feels unfinished.

Presentation	69%
Graphics	53%
Playability	42%
Addictive qualities	36%
Value for money	46%
Overall	46%

THE CURSE OF SHERWOOD

Producer: Mastertronic
Retail Price: **£1.99**
Author: **Derek Brewster**

All is not well in Sherwood Forest, as the willowy-green calm has been broken by the evil presence of the cult of Sagalla. The forest is under its power, and the hearts of the forest's people are filled with fear. In desperation they turn to the only ones who can help, Robin Hood and his band of merry men.

But the odds are stacked high, even against this crowd of dashing do-gooders. So, the Bishop of Derby has agreed to carry out an exorcism upon the forest's fiend, and Friar Tuck, one of Robin's formidable team, travels to meet him. At the forest's edge Tuck finds the Bishop's body, pierced by a black arrow. Attached to its shaft is a parchment fragment, inscribed with a cryptic rhyme. Contained within these poetic lines are clues to be solved if the heart of the wickedness is to be found, and finally destroyed.

Friar Tuck races back to the camp, only to discover that Robin and his men are already under attack, and fighting for their very lives. Who knows who can survive the battle? And Tuck is now the only one free to combat the evil forces abroad in the forest. He is sure to need all of his skills and bravery to save the simple woodland folk from their unenviable fate.

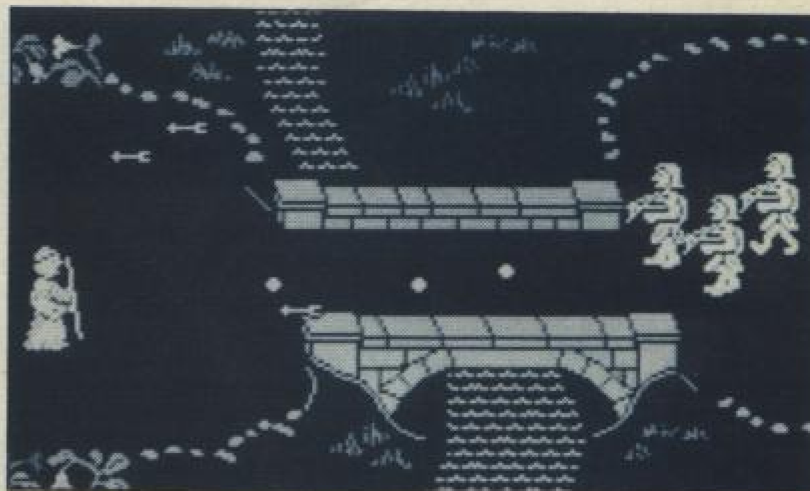
You have control of the good Friar as he moves along the forest pathways, encountering bizarre servants of the Sagallan Priests – each capable of destroying his portly person. Foul tempered ogres are ready to trample on his body, or brain him with frozen chickens; skeletal servants brandish deadly clubs and swords; and werewolves roam with unhealthy appetites.

To avoid such opponents, Tuck is able to move to the left and right, up and down, but he must be fast. If he is hit by a weapon hurled, or fired by his enemies, he dies and loses one of his three lives.

Things become very much easier for our religious Rambo if he throws away his spiritual scruples and instead resorts to killing everyone in sight. Points are awarded for each opponent disposed of, with the score shown at the top right of the screen.

Friar Tuck is intitially armed only with a sword, but as he kills his opponents he can collect and utilise their fallen weapons. When our pious warrior picks up one weapon he must drop the one he carries, and several attempts might be needed to kill an enemy, depending upon the weapon used.

Tuck is not only able to take weapons from his fallen foes, but also any objects they may carry, which can help him progress more easily through the forest. The objects and weapons carried are diplayed at the top of the screen.



When the fighting Friar eventually encounters the Priests of Sagalla, he must hope that his prayers are answered, otherwise his days upon this planet can be counted on the hand of a one-fingered man.

CRITICISM

● **" I am disappointed with this – at first glance it seems appealing and instantly playable, but within a couple of goes I'd discovered a really glaring bug – you get stuck in parts of the playing area (trees and stuff!) so you have to re-load. 'Not to worry' I thought at first, but I soon realised that it's impossible to carry on playing regardless. The graphics are very good, the characters are nicely animated and the backgrounds are *Firelord*esque in the way in which they are coloured and detailed. The sound is a bit limp though, there are a few beeps during play but that's about all you're going to hear here. I can't recomend this because it just doesn't seem finished. "**

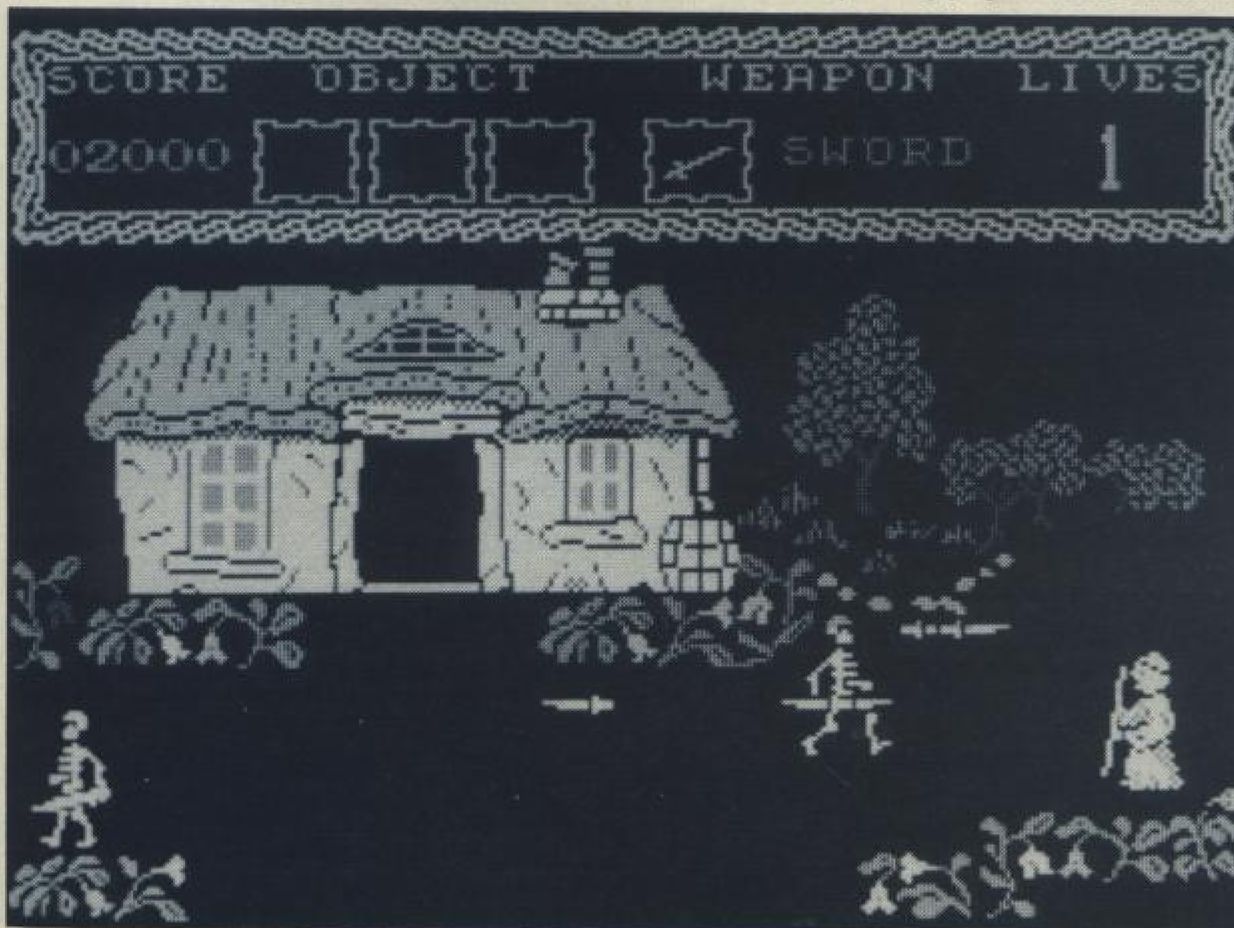
BEN

● *" Oh, what a novelty! An exploration game on the Spectrum. Again. As usual, there's plenty to explore, if the other characters can be avoided – as they are inclined to deal out death as freely a jelly tots. As with any game of this type it will keep the avid arcade adventurer mapping to his hearts content as the locations are pretty varied. However, on the whole it didn't inspire or excite me, especially as my path was constantly blocked by daffodils, daisies and other weedy plants. "*

RICHARD

● " *Curse of Sherwood* would be a really neat game, except for the tiny little bugs involved. It seems that whenever you start to do well, the game realises this and makes sure you can't get out of your present screen without dying – what an ingenious programming technique! Makes playing a bit awkward though. This is basically a good game, with colourful (and sometimes even attractive) graphics and smooth playability. And selling at £1.99, it's well worth thinking about . . . even if it is marred by one or two problems. "

MIKE



COMMENTS

Control keys: A/D left, S/F right, Y to P up, H to ENTER down, B to BREAK fire, Q quit
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor, Interface II
Use of colour: colourful forest scenery
Graphics: clear and distinguishable
Sound: poor and occasional spot effects
Skill levels: one
Screens: large mappable maze
General rating: A barely average arcade adventure.

Presentation	64%
Graphics	70%
Playability	53%
Addictive qualities	50%
Value for money	58%
Overall	56%

XEN

Producer: Sparklers
Retail Price: **£2.99**
Author: **Mark Rivers**

Far away in the constellation of Alpha-Centauri, the Xenon race once lived in peace. Now however, their gentle world has been invaded by the evil armies of Argon. Long ago their planet, Xen, was protected by the Xenon Space Defence Corps, but superior enemy forces have devoured its finest men and arms. Now one crack fighter, Peladus, is the sole survivor of that fighting force. If the people of Xen are to avoid permanent enslavement by the Argon dictatorship he is their only hope.

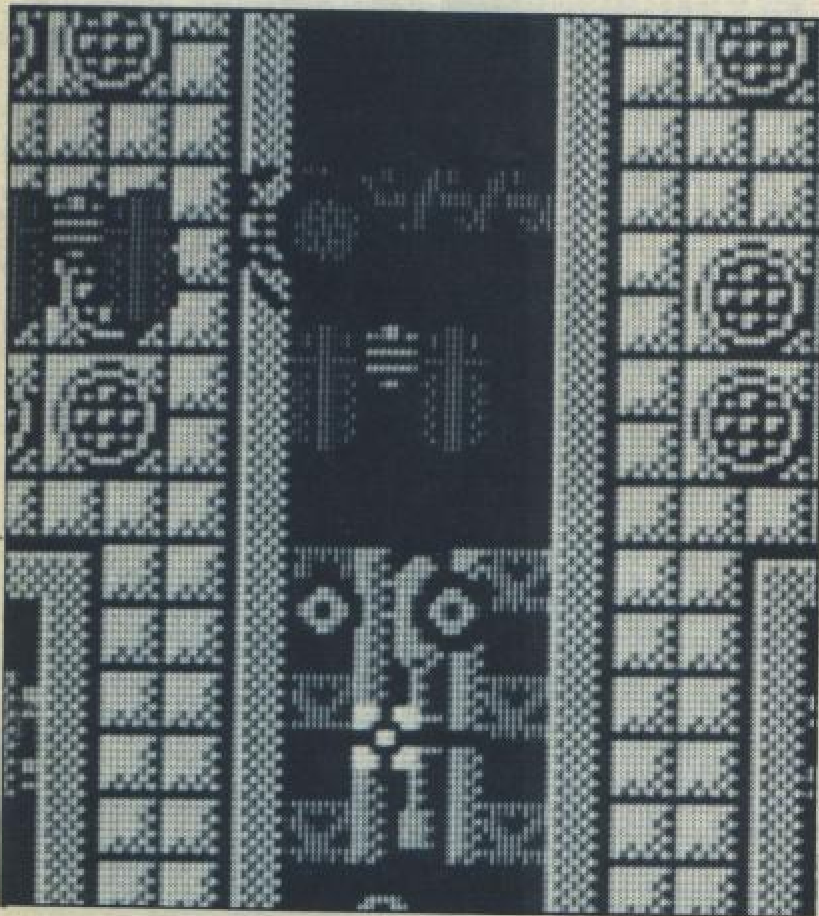
Swarms of enemy space craft come in to attack, some faster and more manoeuvrable than others. You have control of Peladus' fighter, which can be moved to the left and right, forwards and back. They attempt to destroy your fighter by using kamikaze tactics, flinging their craft into yours. Contact with them means a loss of one life. Your fighter has three lives, the number of lives remaining to you is registered on the right hand side of the screen. Be careful not to get caught in the blast as an enemy craft explodes, as this can take out your own fighter. Such blasts can be avoided by flying your space fighter backwards. Ten points are awarded for every enemy ship wiped out.

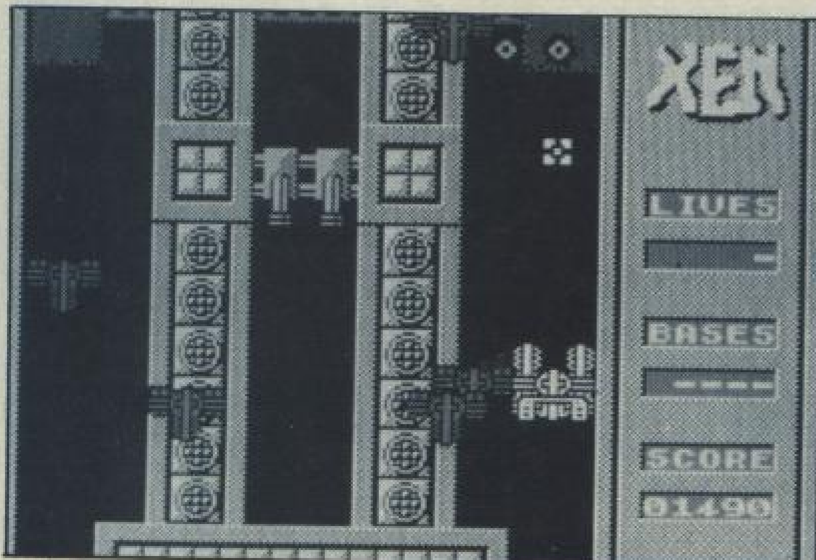
Both ground and spaceborne forces must be defeated before your mission is accomplished. By careful aiming, using the on screen sight, the pink ground based installations of the enemy can be taken out. For each of these destroyed, 100 points are awarded. When six bases have been devastated, the fighter receives an extra life to carry on in battle. The number of bases destroyed is indicated on the left hand side of the screen.

Before your mission is finally accomplished, four zones have to be liberated; the Outer Platforms, the Fields, the Desert, and the Inner Platforms. Only then can the people of Xen truly call themselves free once more.



Cameron's in deep trouble as there's no lives left, no bases destroyed, only 130 points scored and the enemy keeps on coming. We'll soon be advertising for a new photographer at this rate





CRITICISM

● **" Zap zap, dodge, zap zap, zap zapity-zap (yawn!), dodge KAPAOWW!... Need I say more? (Yes! – Ed)... Xen is a Lightforce clone, and I doff my cap to sparklers for even attempting one. At first sight this looks as though it could be quite a good one, but the gameplay is severely lacking. A couple of plays should be enough to convince anyone that this isn't a game that'll keep them up half way into the night. The graphics are surprisingly good, but I feel that a little too much colour has been used, making the action confusing at times. On the whole 7I wouldn't recommend this – pretty, but boring. "**

BEN

● *" Lightforce immediately came to mind when playing Xen. Though if the idea works, I don't see why they shouldn't copy it a bit graphically. The sound on the title screen is a superb bit of buzz, and it's complemented by some very good spot effects during the game. The backgrounds are very detailed and well drawn. Unfortunately the opposing ships are let down by too much colour being used on them. This results in quite a large amount of flicker when they move about the screen. This is only a small problem though, the game is very addictive and fun to play. Definitely worth the asking price. "*

PAUL

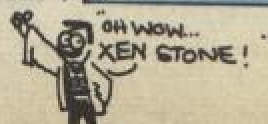
● " Well, if it isn't *Lightforce* – oh, hold on – no it's not. Doesn't half look like it though. So, what has PLAYERS cut price shoot 'em up got to offer that's sparkling with originality? As far as I could see, nothing – except that it has a tendency to place you in some very awkward positions – considered a 'challenge' by some, but just plain unplayable to me. Colour looks as if it has been used well, but when the action hots up it doesn't take much to make everything confusing visually. There's also little idea of depth – it just appears so two dimensional – which isn't the effect that is really needed here. On the plus, side, *Xen* has a reasonable price tag, but it still didn't do an awful lot for me. "

RICHARD

COMMENTS

Control keys: Defineable, Up Down Left and Right
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor, Interface 2
Use of colour: wonderfully colourful but can be slightly comfusing
Graphics: detailed and nicely scrolling backgrounds
Sound: funky tune and worthy spot effects
Skill levels: one
Screens: one continuously scrolling playing area
General rating: A brave attempt to simulate Lightforce, but lacks that game's playability.

Presentation	76%
Graphics	88%
Playability	57%
Addictive qualities	54%
Value for money	63%
Overall	64%



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The Submarine Simulation

MICRO PROSE

SIMULATION • SOFTWARE

ESCAPE FROM SINGE'S CASTLE
DRAGON'S LAIR II

Producer: Software Projects
Retail Price: **£7.95**
Author: **Andy Walker**

Some heroes don't know when they're well off. Having once escaped the scaly clutches of Singe the dragon, Dirk the Daring returns to the Dragon's Lair in search of a pot of gold – will the man do anything for money?

Deep beneath the castle's stony walls, the Lizard King now holds sway, jealously guarding the pot of gold Dirk so desires. Cunning and ruthless, this reptile lord has set traps and problems for anyone so foolish, or brave enough to enter his domain. Before Dirk can possess the gold, he must successfully pass through seven screens.

Dirk begins his journey in a boat, floating down a river pierced by saw-toothed rocks. Hurtling downstream, Dirk follows a course marked by arrows, and paddles quickly to the left and right avoiding the boulders. Contact with a boulder smashes Dirk's boat and flings him headlong into the turbulent water. When the boulders have been successfully negotiated, dangerous whirlpools move across Dirk's path.

Now drier, Dirk must survive Boulder Alley. A giant boulder chases after him, and others sweep down from the enclosing walls. Dirk must avoid these whilst leaping the holes that gape suddenly beneath him.

With Boulder Alley cleared, Dirk arrives in the throne room of the Lizard King. Here his only welcome comes from frying electric bolts, and a grabbing black hand which Dirk despatches with his sword. To leave the room Dirk must sit upon the throne itself.

Now in the dungeons of this dark kingdom, Dirk encounters the Lizard King. Dirk must be fast to avoid its blows, should he falter or be too slow, the King beats him unconscious. For protection Dirk must find his lost sword, plunged deep into the pot of gold. With sword and gold collected, Dirk slays the Lizard King and begins his escape from the deep reptilian world.

A magical flying horse awaits Dirk, to take him through a torrent of boulders and around obstructing walls . . . but first he must enter and leave Doom Dungeon. From the floor of this dire place fire leaps to toast Dirk's tootsies, if he doesn't jump in time, snakes appear from behind doors, heads set to strike and spiders drop from ceilings. Dirk's only means of escape is through a low passageway, and the room of the Mystic Mosaic lies ahead.

Here Dirk must find the safe route across the room. The floor is made up of tiles, only one of which Dirk may step on at a time. These tiles can have a disturbing habit of disappearing, and if Dirk is on one as it vanishes he is plunged to his death. Even 'safe' tiles provide no permanent haven for Dirk, as a large vicious bat appears if he lingers too long.

Dirk has now reached the final screen and can almost taste freedom upon his lips. All he has to do is cross the hot, mud-filled lake and collect the magic bottle from its other side. But as Dirk attempts to cross, the creatures inhabiting the lake try to pull him into their boiling world. The correct path must be found across using the monster-made bridge. Life isn't easy.





Deep down in Doom Dungeon, Dirk the Daring decides to depart.

CRITICISM

● **" This is the most disappointing game of the month – it has been marred horribly by some dodgy programming and the Spectrum's limitations. It doesn't 'hang together' at all well – the eight levels should have some sort of intro so that they follow on from each other a little better. The gameplay is there, but it does take a lot of patience to 'wheedle' it out. On the whole this is far better than** Dragons Lair**, but then again it couldn't really be worse. "**
BEN

● *" Escape From Singe's Castle* is one of the best games to come from SOFTWARE PROJECTS – even better than *Jet Set Willy*. The graphics are excellently designed, and there's always a large range of colours on screen. The screens are well detailed and contain no clashes, while Dirk's animation is very smooth and realistic. Don't be put off by the original – *Dragon's Lair II* is much more addictive, and a hundred times more playable. "*
PAUL

● " There's tons of playability here, and it's all nicely packaged with very clear and well written instructions. I didn't expect the follow up to be anywhere near the arcade smash in terms of graphics, but I was well satisfied nonetheless. The value for money is reasonable – though the price is high, the game is sufficiently addictive to make it worth it. It's a good job too that SOFTWARE PROJECTS managed to do something about the horrendous lack of playability that made the original version such a disappointment. "
MIKE



The programmers' defects really make themselves noticeable on the 128/+2. *There are nine pieces of music, which would be excellent in their own right, but unfortunately they corrupt and change speed with the game – at several times I nearly 'pulled the plug' simply because it was all so annoying. I'm very surprised that the multi-load system hasn't been dispensed with – surely it all could have been crammed into the large memory!*

COMMENTS

Control keys: Q/A up/down, O/P left/right, Space to fire
Joystick: Kempston, Interface 2, Cursor
Use of colour: very good, with no clashes, nice backgrounds
Graphics: well animated and smooth
Sound: spot FX only on 48K, nine tunes as well on 128
Skill levels: one
Screens: eight
General rating: An exciting fantasy challenge, and a great improvement on its predecessor.

Presentation	85%
Graphics	86%
Playability	78%
Addictive qualities	77%
Value for money	78%
Overall	83%

TRAP

Producer: Alligata
Retail Price: **£7.95**
Author: **Richard Stevenson**

As pilot of an Intergalactic battle cruiser, you have penetrated a place where human life strains to exist. Your mission is to defend your home planet against your once peaceful ally. The problem you are faced with is this: can aggression and mindless violence further the cause of peace which you are trying to restore? A tricky question to answer, but being the hero that you are you must succeed and prove yourself worthy as a legendary space fighter.

Your life endangering mission is split into three parts, each testing various aspects of your skills. The first section tests your manoeuvring and reflex capabilities in flight. The enemy have launched a hail of volatile space mines which your ship has either to avoid or obliterate. To aid this task, your battle cruiser is equipped with the latest in trendy high powered space blasters.

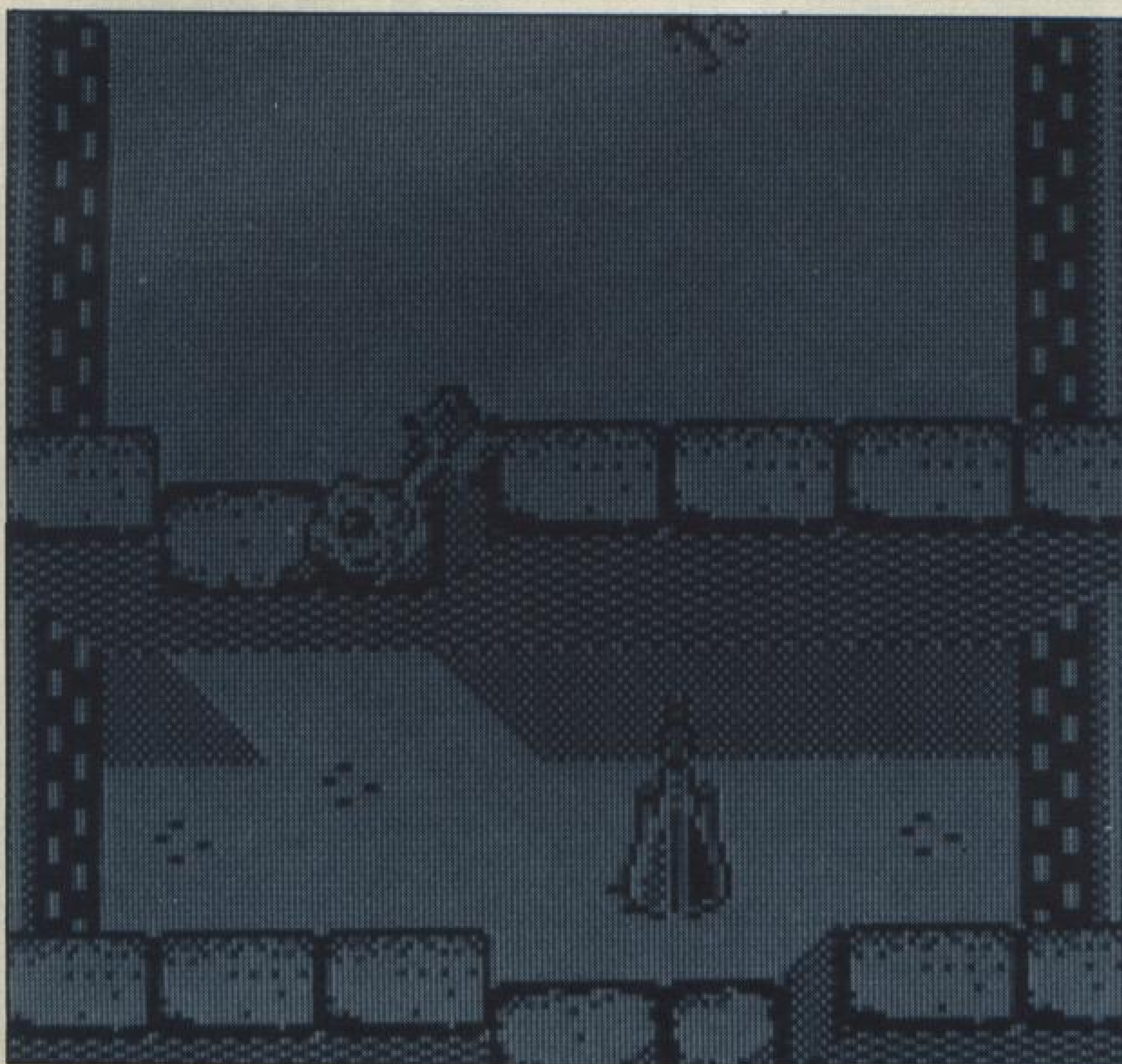
Having survived the shower of mines, you find yourself flying over the Zarkab Valley – a test of courage, complete with rivers and rapids. There are three forms of invading enemy which have to be destroyed: meteors; alien craft, which can be attacked from the front or annihilated with a quick blast of your exhaust pipe; and lasers which flit across the valley and have to be cut off before you can proceed. Accompanying these meanies are an assortment of aliens, such as a fleet of Police Craft.

The final part of the test places you far from your craft on a distant plain. This is designed to test your stealth and determination on foot, and is reminiscent of *Commando* in that you have to battle your way through the undergrowth, blowing everything to smithereens. Most important here is the collection of spherical objects which are in fact Orbs, the currency of the future. With sufficient Orbs you can buy a more powerful space craft which will help you as your quest continues.

Your score is displayed alongside the playing area and also shows the amount of lasers, boats and aliens which have to be destroyed.



Our intrepid explorer enters the valley with only one life remaining.



CRITICISM

●" The Spectrum is not famous for its shoot 'em ups. There have been a couple of outstanding ones, but even more have failed – Trap is simply another one to add to that pile. The area of the screen the game is actually played on is ridiculously small, I can't imagine what the point behind this is – especially as the score and status board takes up nearly a third of the screen! As far as I can see, it isn't worth converting reasonable Commodore shoot 'em ups onto the Spectrum . . . as they never seem to reach their full potential. "

RICHARD

●" *I wasn't really looking forward to this, and I should have listened to my instincts and stayed away – it's extremely unplayable. The screen contains the most appalling mix of colours you could dream, it's like playing a shoot 'em up in a trifle. I had great difficulty in distinguishing the characters from the scenery. Basically, I would feel sorry for anyone buying Trap.* "

PAUL

●" On playing *Trap*, my mind kept jumping to *Xevious* – I wonder why?! The game isn't up to much, and I think that ALLIGATA's advertising has been a little bit immodest – they seem to be putting a lot of effort behind a game which doesn't really deserve it. The shading on the planets in the first bit of the game is pretty appalling, even given the limitations of the Spectrum. Come to think of it, my comparison between *Trap* and *Xevious* isn't really accurate – I much prefer the latter. "

MIKE

COMMENTS

Control keys: Q/A speed up/down, O/P left/right, SPACE fire, A/SPACE drop bomb
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor, Interface 2
Use of colour: lots, but it's badly used
Graphics: reasonable, but rather confusing
Sound: no tune and reasonable spot effects
Skill levels: one
Screens: 14
General rating: A cramped and confused vertically scrolling shoot 'em up.

Presentation	70%
Graphics	66%
Playability	54%
Addictive qualities	51%
Value for money	55%
Overall	59%

TERROR OF THE DEEP

Producer: Mirrorsoft
Retail Price: **£7.95**
Author: **Mr Micro**

Something strange is happening in the depths of Loch Ness – and it's got nothing to do with Nessy. In true 'Stingray' style, The loch has become infested with potentially dangerous alien creatures – and you have been chosen to eradicate the source of this alien threat. So, in the comfort of an ageing diving bell, you are lowered to the lake's bed and your mission begins . . .

The screen displays a view from the glass viewing screen of the diving bell – beneath this is a series of switches used to control the craft, adjusting its speed and direction. Moving the joystick left or right causes a hand to move across the controls, which are then activated by pushing the joystick up or down.

Attached to the top of the craft is a spotlight, used to illuminate your surroundings, and oxygen is circulated via a hand-pump. Energy is in short supply, so every so often you have to turn a wheel (situated at the bottom right of the screen) to boost your energy level – at the expense of a loss of fuel. A limited supply of spears is also kept on board, along with two bombs – the fire button is used to launch either weapon.

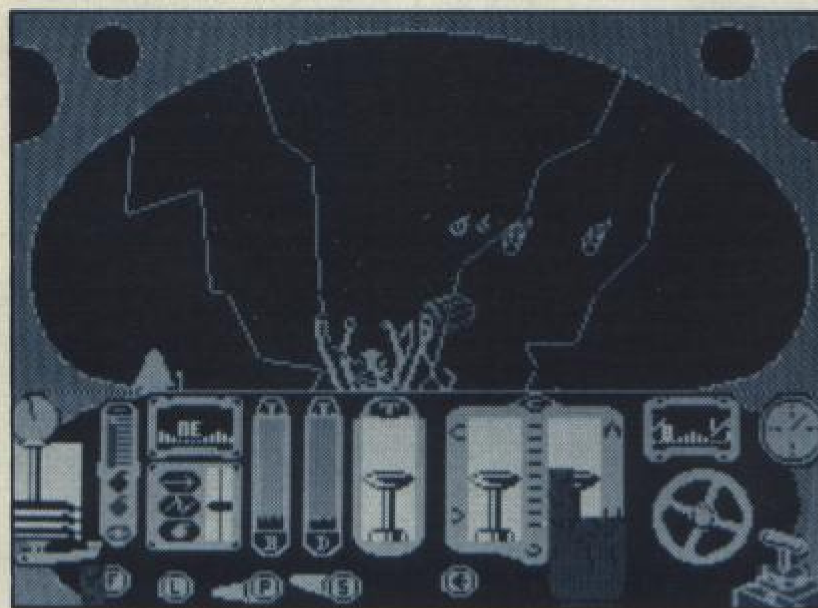
Amongst the harmless fish swimming around are aggressive aliens, which must be eradicated. The spears can be used to destroy these aliens, and more importantly, stop them clinging to the edge of the diving bell. Electrifying the hull disposes of any aliens that make it through your defences.

When your supply of spears is exhausted, or energy is low, you can call up to the supply ship for more supplies by using the klaxon – two blasts for fuel, one for ammunition. Supplies are sent down to the bell's current location, which means you have to stay put. However, a stationary craft attracts the attention of a ghastly creature which tries to attach itself to the bell. It can be detached with an electric shock, but if it is left there too long your craft is destroyed.

Following the fish leads you to the source of the alien power – which is where your two bombs come in handy. If things get too hot to handle though, you can always resurface and replenish supplies, before descending once more into the dark depths . . .



Deep in the murky waters of Loch Ness, Cameron encounters more terrors of the inner space.



THE SCOTTISH
SENTINAL
LATEST TOTAL 800
TERROR OF
THE DEEP
STATIONARY CRAFT
ATTRACTS DESTRUCTION

CRITICISM

● " Terror of the Deep **can be described in one word – odd! What a wonderful scenario, and what a weird control method. It took me a fair amount of time to find the game hidden amongst all the strangeness, and I'm not sure that it was worth the effort. The action is infrequent (and not particularly testing once found) and searching around the seemingly endless stretch of water is less than interesting, this leads to tedium and eventually apathy. I can't recommend this, it isn't addictive and it certainly isn't any fun to play.** "

BEN

● " *The programmers of* Terror of the Deep *certainly have a good sense of the original. I was enthralled by all the features contained in the inlay, which made the game sound so interesting. The program itself is a great let down though. After being built up by the terrific scenario, the product turns out to be very boring and shallow. The instrument panel is easy to use once you've sorted out what is what – in fact this is about the only pleasing factor.* Terror of the Deep is essentially very basic, and contains little to do. "

PAUL

● " I'm not keen on this at all. The graphics aren't very good, and while it's nice to be told exactly where you went wrong when you die, I think the necessity for the newspaper at the end highlights the fact that it's difficult to keep tabs on everything that's happening during the game. As far as addictiveness is concerned, I would be compelled to play it longer than I actually did if I'd bought it, but that's only because it costs so much. Overall, I don't think there's enough actual content in *Terror of the Deep* to make it worth considering. "

MIKE

COMMENTS

Control keys: Z/X left/right, M/K up/down, Space to fire
Joystick: Kempston, Interface 2
Use of colour: monochrome playing area, brightly coloured instrument panel
Graphics: nice newspaper, but otherwise pretty average
Sound: helpful FX, nothing stunning
Skill levels: one
Screens: scrolling underwater lochscape
General rating: A good idea, but its potential hasn't been realised.

Presentation	63%
Graphics	52%
Playability	43%
Addictive qualities	40%
Value for money	39%
Overall	44%

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PREVIEW

Coming soon to a Spectrum near you!



Even a weed like Cameron can manage 75kgs in this weight lifting contest

WORLD GAMES – AN INTERNATIONAL SPORTING EXTRAVAGANZA

EPYX have long enjoyed success on the Commodore 64 with their outstanding sport simulations. The team are now hoping to repeat this success in the Spectrum market, with the release of *World Games* – a series of eight events, introducing the player to many new and exciting national sports.

The first stop on this jet-setting tour takes you to Russia for two bouts of weight lifting. The first, the 'Snatch', is used as a subtle and challenging introduction, and is quickly followed by the more involved 'Clean and Jerk'. Both require accurate timing, and involve attempts to lift anything from 75kg to 225kg.

Having endured the muscle-ripping torment in Russia, there's hardly time to pause for breath as you're whisked to Germany for a Barrel Jumping competition. In this event the intrepid sportsman is required to skate across a frozen lake, building up enough speed to jump anything from three to twenty-five barrels.

Acapulco's the next venue, where the multi-talented participant dons his swimming trunks to engage in a bit of competitive Cliff Diving. Positioning and wind speed consideration are all-important here, with points awarded for style and successful completion of the dive.

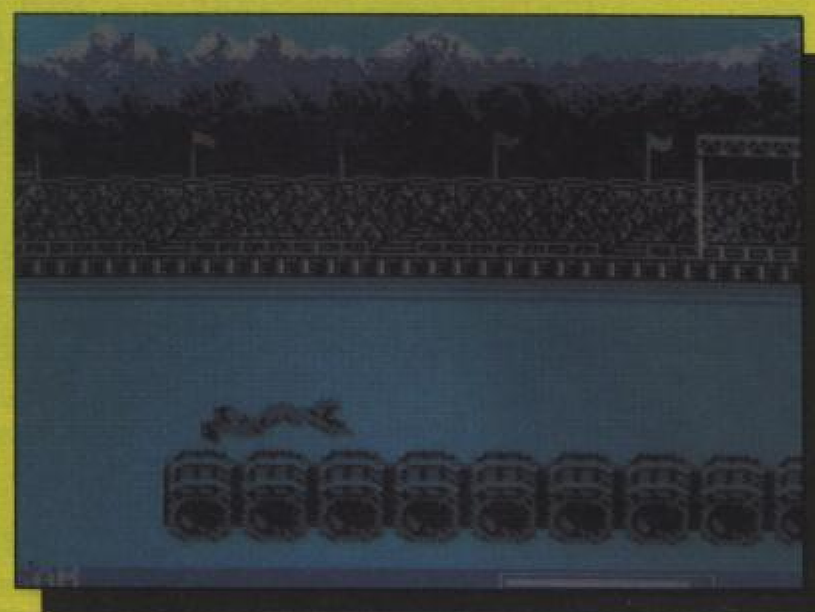
With the diving out of the way, it's time for a quick towel down, before boarding the plane for snowy Southern France and the Slalom Skiing event. This sets the player hurtling down a tortuous Nordic obstacle course. The objective is to reach the finish line in the fastest time, with a time penalty added for every obstacle missed.

The next event is a Log Rolling contest which takes place on one of Canada's many rivers. The object here is to maintain your balance on a floating log, while your opponent desperately tries to knock you into the water. Timing is crucial if you are to avoid an early bath.

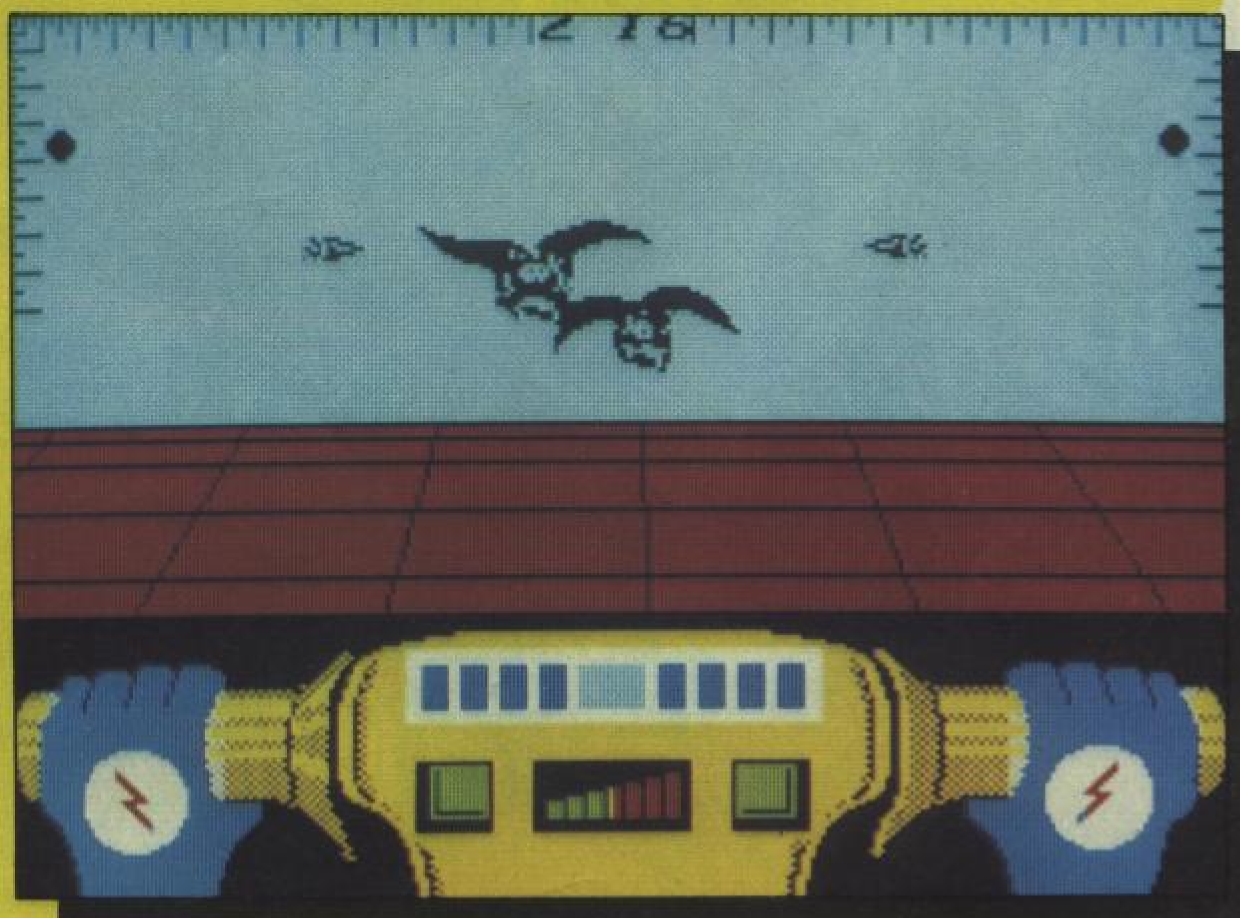
Following a quick stop in bonny Scotland for the Caber Toss, it's off to the USA for a bout of Bull Riding. This simply involves keeping your rear firmly planted on the back of five different bulls, as they hurl and buck around the ring.

The final event takes place in Japan – a Sumo Wrestling contest between two obese grapplers. The objective is simple: to engage in head to head combat with your oriental opponent, and attempt to throw him to the ground (or out of the ring) by using a combination of any of the twelve available moves. The quicker your opponent is defeated, the higher the score.

World Games should be in the shops by the time you read this, and a full review will follow in our next issue.


Whoops, Cameron can't even clear the first barrel – let alone the other 13!

Our daring diver accepts the challenge of Acapulco's highest cliff . . .



THE FINAL CHALLENGE FROM THE GODDESS OF RETRIBUTION



Cameron gets a real ribbing from his skeletoid enemies

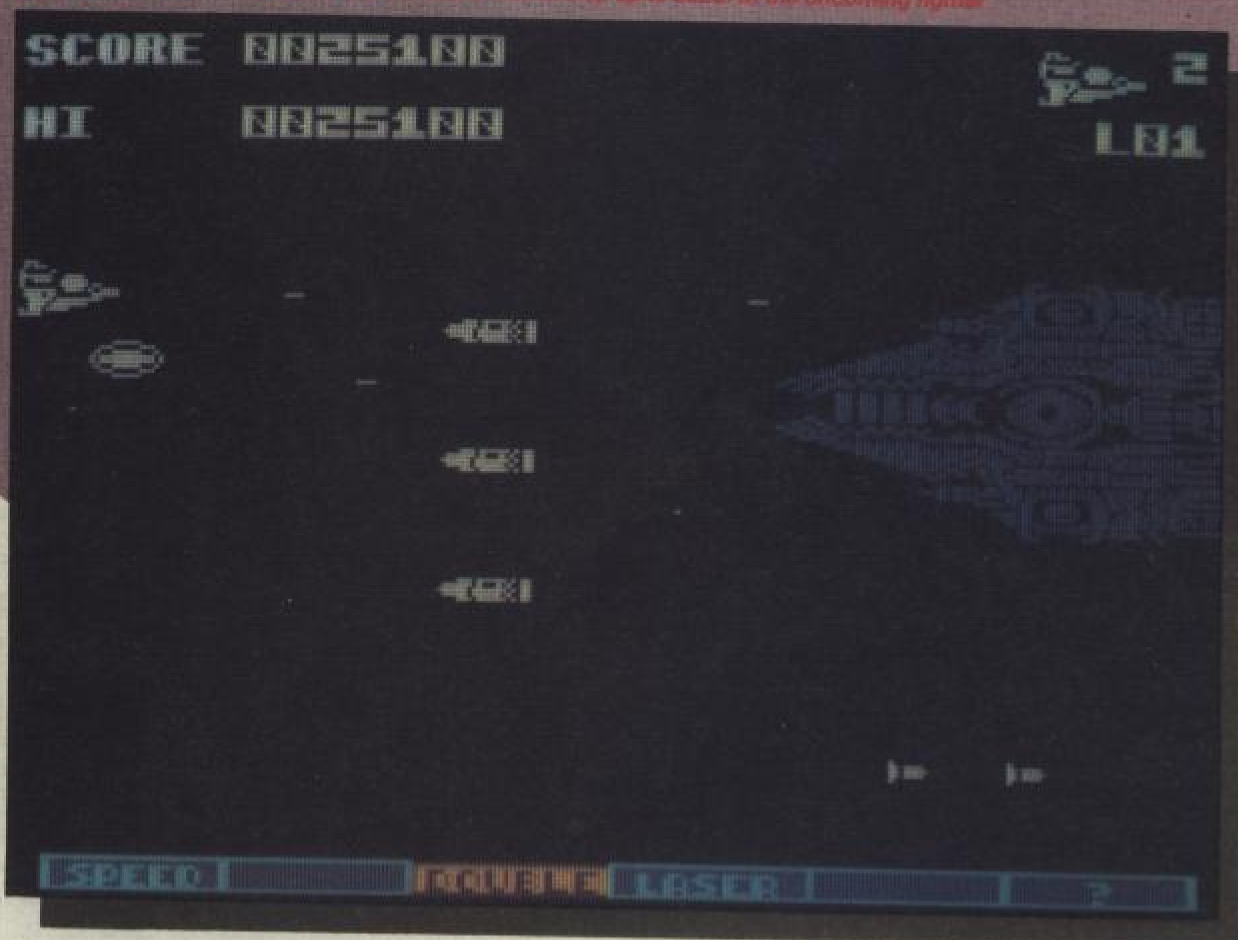
KONAMI are soon to release *Nemesis*, the conversion of the smash hit arcade shoot 'em up. LMLWD insists that Nemesis is the Goddess of Retribution, but as far as we're concerned it's a war-torn planet under attack from its old enemies from the sub-cluster of Bacterion. As usual, your intergalactic fighter pilot skills have been called into operation to save the planet from this tyranny.

The landscape scrolls horizontally as you blast a passage through the planet's caverns. However, the meagre armoury that the fighter is initially provided with is not nearly enough to face the dreaded motherships, and therefore your fighter must be upgraded throughout the game.

The caverns house many monstrosities, including fire-spitting volcanos and fiendish skeletons who spit poisonous acid. There's also a whole army of marauding aliens dealing out death and destruction to all in their path.

The *Nemesis* that we received from **KONAMI**'s representative was the latest working version available. However it is still incomplete, and the game is yet to be approved by **KONAMI** . . . until this approval is given, any 'reviews' which you may read are premature – and probably inaccurate!

The end of screen one, and the fearsome mothership spits death at the oncoming fighter



NEMESIS – WRATH OF A WARLOCK

Continuing the recent spate of 2000 AD licences, **MARTECH** have snapped up Nemesis The Warlock, one of that magazine's most popular characters. The result is a platform game which sees Nemesis leaping around, with plenty of slaughter thrown in for good measure. The player takes the role of Nemesis, as he prepares to save the Galaxy from the evil shadow of Torquemada and his savage army – The Terminators.

There is a sword through the skull at the bottom left hand corner of the screen, representing the number of Terminators which must be killed to progress further into the adventure. The longer Nemesis spends on a screen, the more Torquemada senses his presence and sends out reinforcements to conquer him. Nemesis is equipped with a gun and a limited supply of bullets, and when this eventually disappears he must rely on Excessus, his mystical sword.

As the screens become more involved, the only way to exit is by climbing the accumulating piles of bodies – and the tactics become more and more gruesome as the game continues. Get far enough, and eventually the final battle with Torquemada himself ensues.

MARTECH are promising great gameplay and very addictive action from *Nemesis The Warlock*. Whether this is true or not will be decided next month in the full review, but until then – Be Pure . . . Be Vigilant . . . Behave!

Nemesis the warlock stands aloft on one of the uppermost platforms

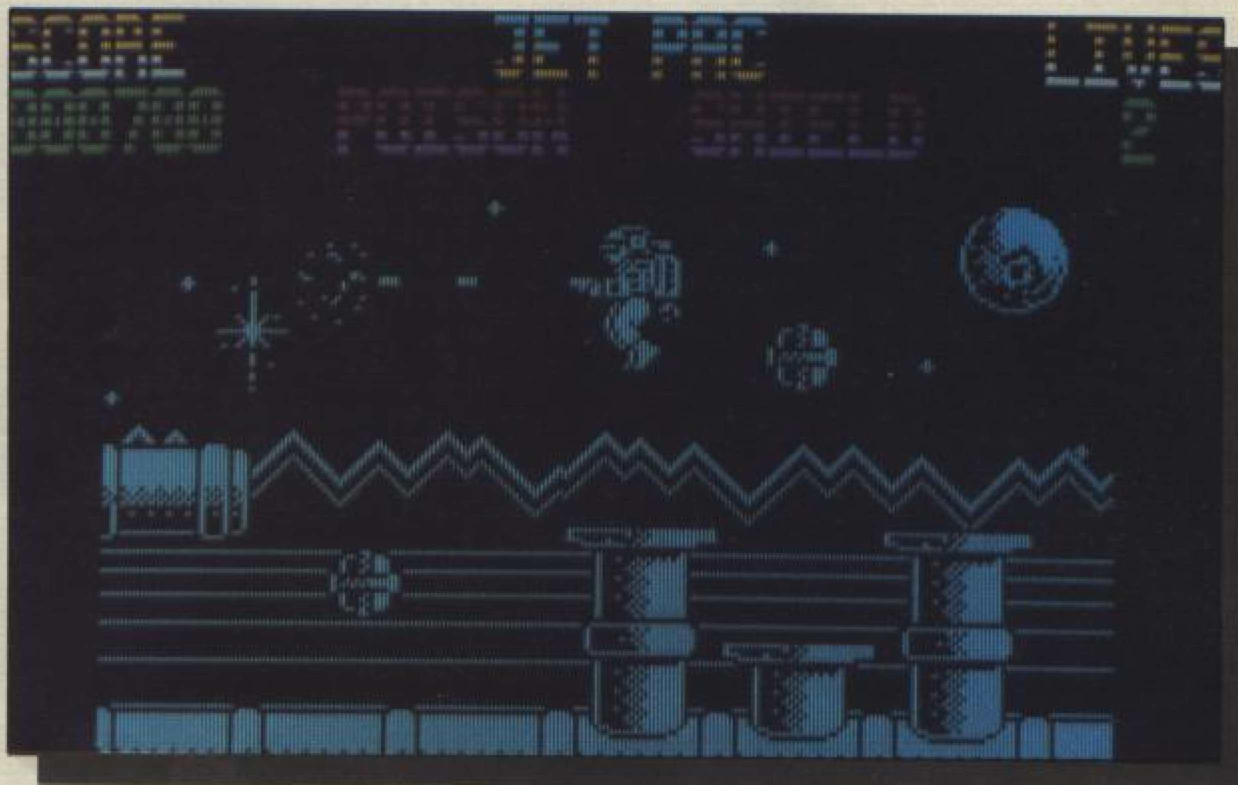




PROGRAMMERS WITH PEDIGREE

A fulsome programme of releases is planned for the Spectrum down at Chateau **HEWSON**, and the first game we should be seeing is *Gunrunner*, due at the end of May. Programmed by **Christian Urquhart**, the man behind *Daley Thomson's Decathlon* and, more recently, *Robot Messiah*, *Gunrunner* takes the form of a scrolling shoot 'em up. The scenario has not yet been finalised, but the the central character has to fight through 16 levels of an alien landscape collecting items and dealing death to a range of mobile attackers. The jet-pack wearing hero can run, leap, crouch and, of course, fly, and he travels smoothly – over 30 frames of animation are involved in his movement.

Zynapse, a game written by **Dominic Robinson** (responsible for the Spectrum version of *Uridium*), is due out at the end of June and features several neat programming twists; Dominic plans to scroll the colour memory for a start! Another **HEWSON** game, as yet untitled, is planned for the end of July, while the month of August should see *Exolon* arrive in the shops, courtesy of **Rafaelle Cecco** whose last labour of love was *Equinox*.



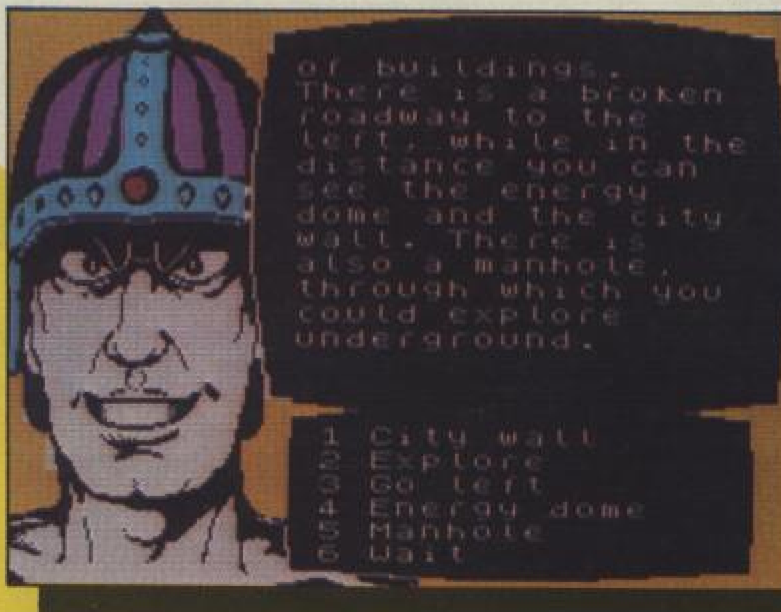
The intrepid hero in GUNRUNNER gains a little bit of altitude and zaps an opponent with his trusty laser

UP FROM DOWN UNDER

Fresh from news of their takeover by Budget Masters, **MASTERTRONIC, MELBOURNE HOUSE** announced the imminent arrival of a batch of new full-price games. *Doc The Destroyer* is well underway, and ought to be ready for a May release if all goes according to plan. Doc is an outcast of the future – a rough and tough superbeing ejected from the safety of a protective dome that shelters the few humans who survived a holocaust which destroyed the majority of lifeforms on our planet. Doc needs to battle his way through subterranean passages, gain entry to the dome and do battle with a group of priests who run the dome. You see, only Doc knows that the dome is about to be swamped by massive floods – and for speaking up he was cast out as a heretic.

Before play begins, you have to allocate attributes to Doc's persona – strength, endurance, intelligence, luck and charisma all play a part in the way in which Doc interacts with his environment and the creatures he meets. A text narrative scrolls in a large window on screen, pausing every so often for the player to make a choice from a menu of options. Every so often, unpleasant creatures are encountered and should you choose to stand and fight, a mini arcade sequence ensues in which proficiency at joystick-wielding in true beat 'em up style decides the outcome.

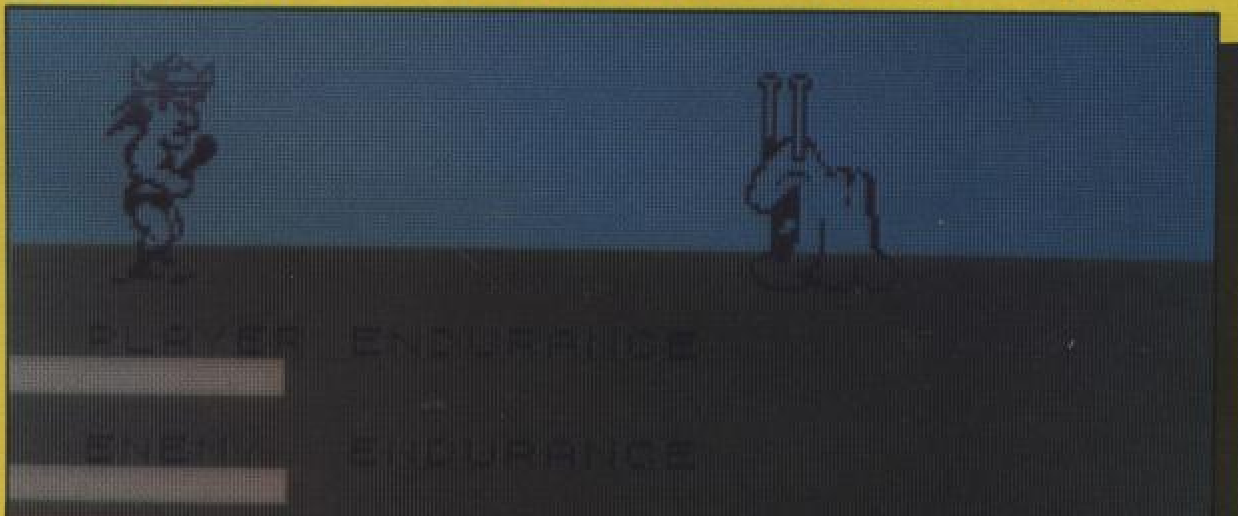
Half a dozen options confront Doc in his mission to gain access to the energy dome from which he has been banished. Go down the manhole and . . .



Deke is a real rough tough criminal type – an offender from the day he first broke free from his playpen. Now the authorities have got thoroughly fed up with his antics: he's been thrown into jail and is going to be turned into an android. Deke isn't too impressed with this prospect, so plans an escape. He's just broken out of prison and is on the lam when you step into the breach.

Controlling Deke – the blue guy on the screen – the aim is to biff and bop the regenerating security droids that patrol platform city, find keys to open locked portals and make good your escape. All this fun for £7.95 – look out for *Knucklebusters* from **MELBOURNE HOUSE**.

. . . . before too long you meet some nasty creatures. Doc attempts to destroy a slobbering slug.







POWERING UP

Zooming round in a biplane, Ace Lensperson Cameron Pound goes for the A – he's already collected the W and plans to head out into futurespace

Part of the budget wing of **CRL**, a label known as **THE POWER HOUSE**, plans to augment all its releases with an audio track – a group called *House Electronic Experience* is to provide musical accompaniment for every new release. A game and a tune for £1.99 – can't be bad!

The first two **POWER HOUSE** games should be out any day now – *Timeflight* and *SWAT*. *Timeflight* puts you in the cockpit of a Word War I fighter plane, engaging other planes in dogfights. After collecting the letters to spell WARP you travel through time and continue your shoot 'em up exploits in space. *SWAT*, on the other hand, is much more down to earth – you're a bug attempting to escape from a decidedly dangerous garden. Other insects are hungry and view you as a tasty morsel – kill them off or run away – while poisonous plants have to be avoided, and worms eaten to keep up stamina.



FLASHING IN

The early signs are that **MASTERTRONIC**'s game based on the *Flash Gordon* film is going to be a lot of fun. First announced before the Personal Computer World Show in September last year, *Flash Gordon* is due for a Summer release and will contain four levels: a cave scene, a jungle scene, a hover-bike riding sequence and then the final confrontation with Ming the Merciless. Here's a little taster of the hover-bike part, to whet your appetites. . . .

Not forgetting *Amaurote*, another game from **BINARY DESIGN** due out on **MASTERTRONIC**'s **MAD** label. Controlling a robot walker that can lob bouncing bombs, your task is to clear a 25-sector city of giant, mutant insects. The bugs have grown to their huge size on account of a strange form a radiation emitted by the very concrete used to build the cityscape – and at the centre of each sector, a Queen Bug lurks which must be destroyed before you move onto the next part of town.

Yet another **MASTERTRONIC** label, this time **BULLDOG**, has a prile of releases on the starting blocks (three, for non card-players). *Colony* is a 3D gardening game set in space – as a droid it is your task to fence off a garden and grow mushrooms for sale to visiting space craft. Bugs and beasties have to be controlled and fences kept in good repair if the crop is to prosper. Look out for *Rasterscan* and *Invasion*, which complete the trio of imminent releases from 'The Best of British'.

COOKE IN THE POT

Micronaut One (subtitled The Moebious Trip), is the latest game to emerge from the creative talents of Pete Cooke, programmer of two previous smashes – *Tau Ceti* and *Academy*. It's due for general release in May from **NEXUS**, and claims to be an effective shoot 'em up with intellectual overtones.

The action takes place in long corridors deep within an asteroid, the home of a mega computer. The view of the corridors scroll towards you in first person perspective. Lurking deep within the corridors are hordes of invaders, all determined to destroy the computer.

Also on the cards from **NEXUS** is a game from **PARANOID SOFTWARE** dubbed, *The Hades Nebula*. The game revolves around the events after the hasty retreat of Earth's population as the planet began to lose high amounts of energy.

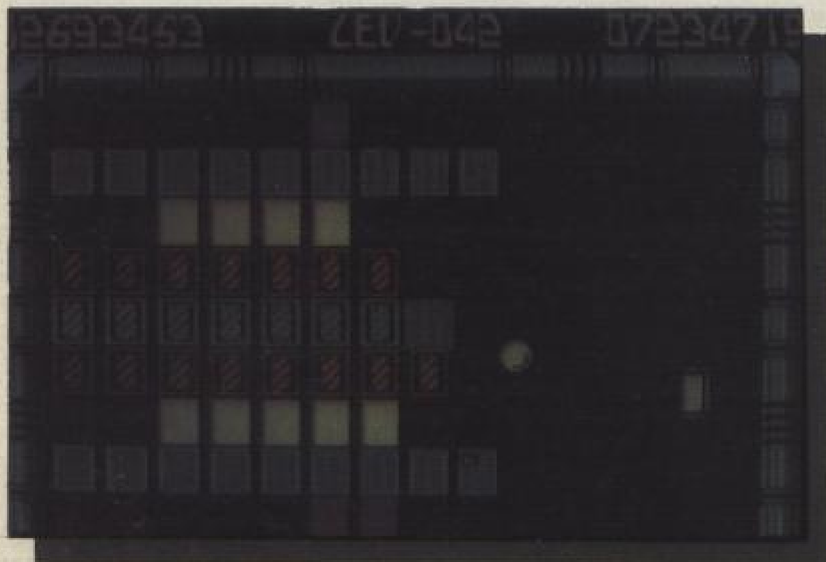
Ten colony craft set out, hoping to settle down somewhere not unwholly adjacent to the Orion Nebula. But shock! Horror! Enter the evil Emperor, whose galactic army captures nine of the Colony's craft, enslaving their occupants. Never fear, enter hero onboard the tenth craft (you – who else?) who manages to escape the tyranny and, after settling down on the Orion Nebula itself, returns to the Emperors command centre, determined to rescue the captives.

The Hades Nebula takes the form of a vertically scrolling shoot 'em up containing fifty sprites. We'll bring you a full preview as soon as possible.



BREAKING OUT

With *Auf Weidesehen Monty* just around the corner, GREMLIN are nearly ready to release their enhanced version of the basic *Breakout/Pong* game. Called *Krakout*, this particular bat 'n' ball game is played horizontally on the Spectrum screen and features a collection of upgrades from the original classic. Should be in the shops by the time you read this.



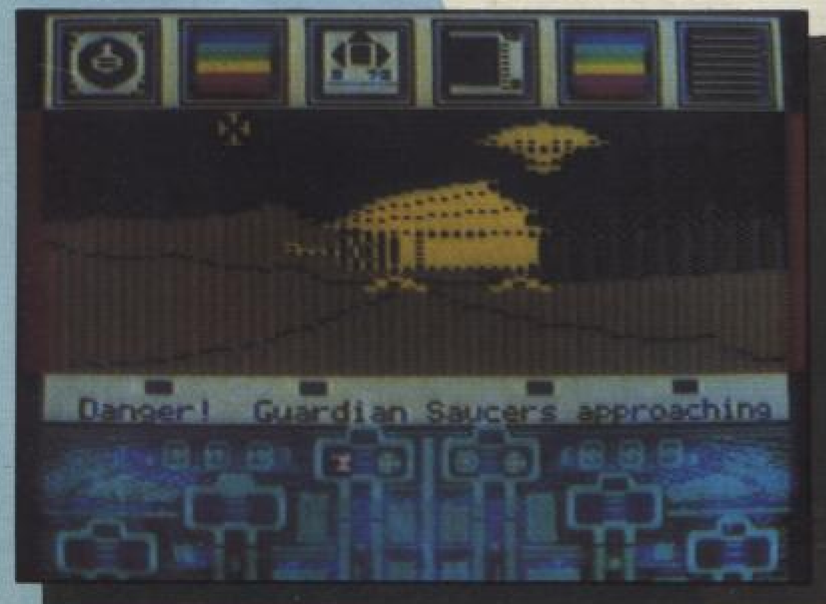
More bat and ball fun from GREMLIN

ACTIVISION ACTION

With a host of arcade licences just around the corner, including *Firetrap*, *Rampage*, *Wonderboy* and *Quartet*, ACTIVISION are currently putting the finishing touches to *Howard the Duck*, an arcade combat adventure featuring the feathered cartoon hero, and a Spectrum version of the LUCASFILM game *Koronis Rift is nearing completion – but like Little Computer People, 128K owners are the only Spectrum people who will be able to travel across the fractally-generated landscape in search of techno-scrap.*

Stablemates, ELECTRIC DREAMS *should have completed Enduro Racer* by the time you read this: we've managed to curb our enthusiam and are eagerly awaiting a finished version of the game before embarking on the review. *Big Trouble In Little China*, and *Star Raiders II* should also be ready for review in time for next Issue, if all goes well.

It looks as if the automatic defence systems have been activated



FUTURE GAMES

Space fighting features heavily in STARLIGHT's next couple of releases from under the wing of ARIOLASOFT. *Deathscape* puts you at the controls of a Sol Federation fighter craft expecting to enter into one-on-one combat with a Varg pilot. In the advanced political climate of the future, intergalactic wars have been recognised as a horrendous waste of lives and resources, so the Sol Federation and the Vargs settle their differences by sending two crack pilots into a deadly space tunnel known as the Deathscape.

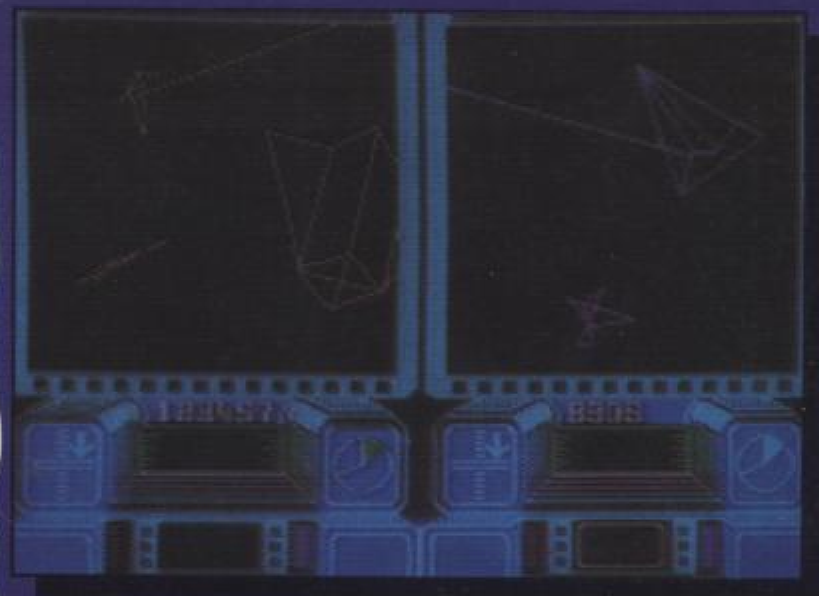
Trouble is, this time when you enter the Deathscape you discover that the Vargs have decided to cheat: you are confronted by an entire fleet of Varg fighters . . . only your crack combat skills can save the Sol Federation from being over-run by the evil aliens.

Continuing the space combat theme, STARLIGHT plan to pit would-be heroes against yet another horde of alien invaders in *Dogfight 2187*. Apparently, a hole in the space-time continuum has allowed the aliens to enter your galaxy, and the first priority has to be sealing the breach in space. Your predecessors in time, The Old Ones, created a Spatial Generator which would be capable of sealing the rift in space – except this wondrous piece of equipment has been dismantled and the components scattered across the galaxy.

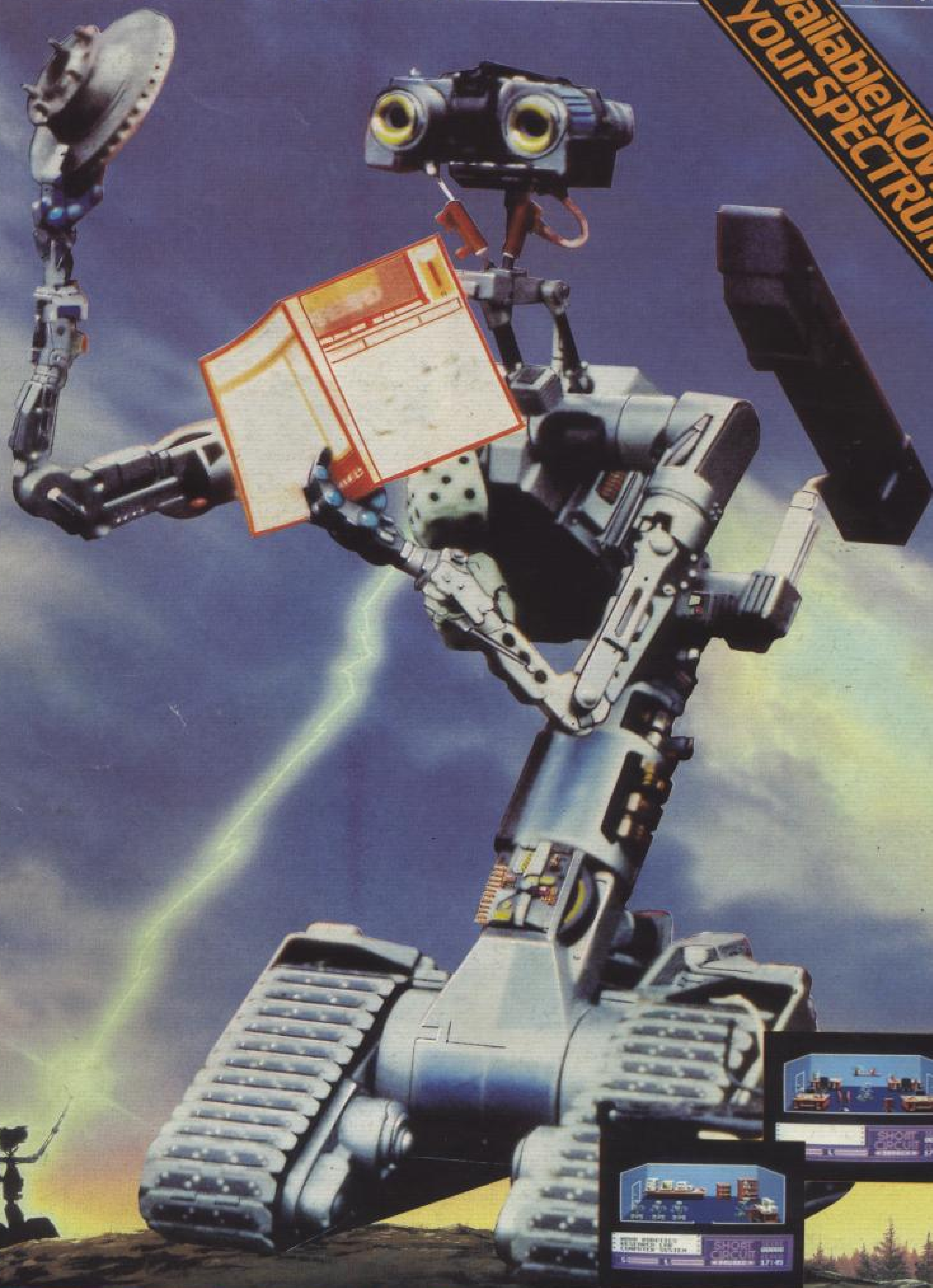
Fighting off the attacking aliens is problematic enough, but those vital parts have to be found if life as you have come to know and love it is to be preserved. *Dogfight* uses a twin viewscreen display to present the action in space, and features vector graphics. One or two players can join in the fun, *Top Gun* style.



The Vargs simply don't know what's cricket. Dirty rotten cheats have entered the Deathscape combat tunnel in force . . .



Blasting your way through space, playing the role of Rhett Dexter, potential saviour of the universe in DOGFIGHT 2187


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